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ABSTRACT

"The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain: Challenges, Changes, and Opportunities" was a conference organized by the Runnymede Trust in partnership with other organizations to consider changes in multiethnic Britain in recent years, principal challenges and opportunities for the future, and what to do about them. These issues were discussed in general plenary sessions and in specialist workshops concerned with antiracism, identity, immigration and citizenship, law and justice, urban policy, and work and management. Following an overview of the conference, extracts are presented from the following conference papers: (1) "Purpose and Context" (Trevor Phillips); (2) "Setting the Agenda" (Bhikhu Parekh); (3) "Government Policy" (Michael Howard); (4) "Goals and Gains: (Herman Ouseley); (5) "Ethnicity and Complexity" (Tariq Modood); (6) "Concerns in the Inner City" (Pola Uddin); (7) "Renewing Anti-Racism" (David Gillborn); (8) "The Future of Ethnicity" (Annette Bosscher); (9) "Education Matters" (Fritz Wittek); (10) "The Far Right" (Andree Shepherd); and (11) "The Power of TV Imagery" (Meera Syal). One of the major conference recommendations was that a national commission be set up to develop a new philosophy and strategies to work for the future of the nation's ethnic groups. An appendix lists conference participants. (Contains 1 figure and 2 tables.) (SLD)

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Challenge Change and Opportunity

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overview, texts and agenda

The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain:
report on the conference
University of Reading, autumn 19[illegible]

The Runnymede Trust

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Challenge, Change and Opportunity:
overview, texts and agenda

Report on the conference at the University of Reading, September 1994, organised by the Runnymede Trust in partnership with the Commission for Racial Equality, the European Commission and the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Race and Community.

Published January 1995

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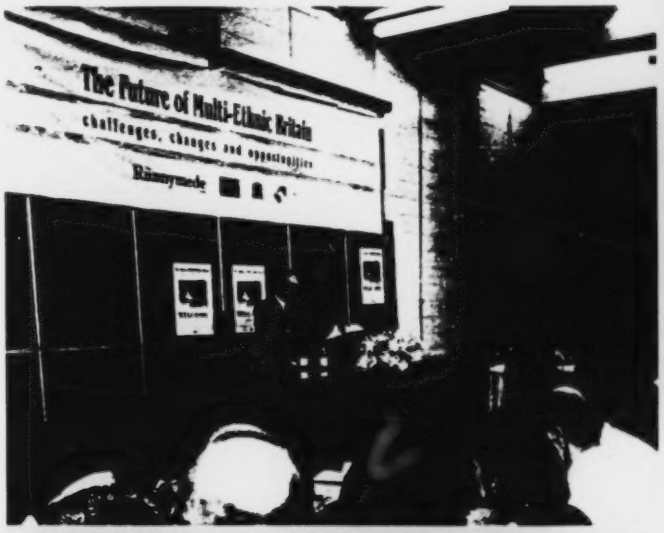
Additional copies of this report are available from the Runnymede Trust at the cost of £5.00 per copy. Also available at £5.00 per copy is the conference resource book, *Multi-Ethnic Britain : Facts and Trends*.

Cover photo credits: Format Partners/Melanie Friend for bottom left and top right; Format Partners/Maggie Murray for centre; Rod Leon (conference photographer) for all others.

Rabbi Julia Neuberger

Michael Howard addressing the conference



Naina Patel

Claude Moraes and Sarah Spencer

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CONTENTS

PREFACE 5

OVERVIEW

- "People growing up like me" 7
- Themes and threads 9
- The need for a new public philosophy 10
- Cities and accountabilities 11
- Employment and glass ceilings 12
- The changing nature of racism 13
- Law, legislation and justice 14
- Immigration and asylum policy 15
- The European context 16

TEXTS

- Purpose and context, by Trevor Phillips 18
- Setting the agenda, by Bhikhu Parekh 20
- Government policy, by Michael Howard 23
- Goals and gains, by Herman Ouseley 27
- Ethnicity and complexity, by Tariq Modood 31
- Concerns in the inner city, by Pola Uddin 33
- Renewing anti-racism, by David Gillborn 35
- European dimensions: 37
  - The future of ethnicity, by Annette Bosscher
  - Education matters, by Fritz Wittek
  - The far right, by Andrée Shepherd
- The power of TV imagery, by Meera Syal 39

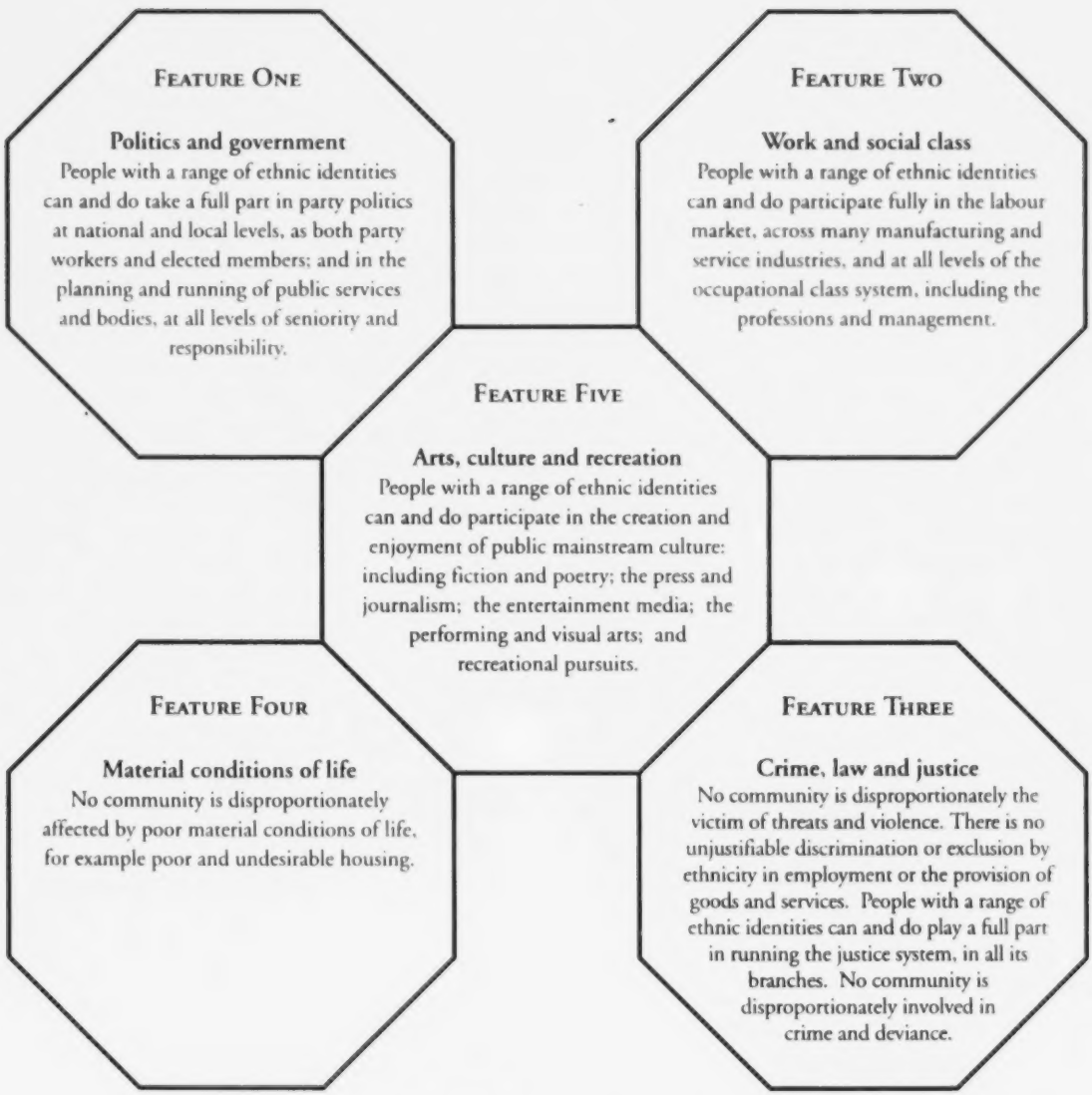
AGENDA

- Principles 42
- Action points 43

APPENDIX

- List of participants 45

The Multi-Ethnic Good Society – five features


Feature One
Politics and government
People with a range of ethnic identities can and do take a full part in party politics at national and local levels, as both party workers and elected members; and in the planning and running of public services and bodies, at all levels of seniority and responsibility.
Feature Two
Work and social class
People with a range of ethnic identities can and do participate fully in the labour market, across many manufacturing and service industries, and at all levels of the occupational class system, including the professions and management.
Feature Five
Arts, culture and recreation
People with a range of ethnic identities can and do participate in the creation and enjoyment of public mainstream culture: including fiction and poetry; the press and journalism; the entertainment media; the performing and visual arts; and recreational pursuits.
Feature Four
Material conditions of life
No community is disproportionately affected by poor material conditions of life, for example poor and undesirable housing.
Feature Three
Crime, law and justice
No community is disproportionately the victim of threats and violence. There is no unjustifiable discrimination or exclusion by ethnicity in employment or the provision of goods and services. People with a range of ethnic identities can and do play a full part in running the justice system, in all its branches. No community is disproportionately involved in crime and deviance.

Notes

This brief summary of the measurable features of a good society was provided at the conference for discussion. The first four of the five features were used to provide a framework for the presentation of statistics in the conference resource book, *Multi-Ethnic Britain : Facts and Trends*. Copies of this are still available, price £5.00. Publication details are on page 49.

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Preface

I am very pleased to introduce this report on the future of multi-ethnic Britain.

The report arises from a major conference held at the University of Reading in September 1994. But it is much more than just a conference report. In addition to recording what was said and discussed at the conference itself, it is an aide-memoire for further debate and practical action.

One of the conference recommendations was that a national commission should be set up, to take the debates further. Such a commission, it was envisaged, would help to develop a new public philosophy and consensus, and new terminology and concepts suitable for the twenty-first century. Even more importantly, it would draw up precise recommendations for a wide range of bodies. These would have the authority of having been carefully thought out in partnership with very large numbers of people.

The Runnymede Trust will indeed set up a national commission, and is seeking funding. Preparatory work is being funded by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust.

The conference at Reading was organised by the Runnymede Trust in partnership with three other organisations, the Commission for Racial Equality, the European Commission and the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Race and Community. We were very grateful for our partners' assistance and collaboration. I should also like to acknowledge and thank the 300 people who took part in the conference. Their contributions have very significantly helped to shape this report — as they will readily recognise as they read through these pages.

I hope that all those who were at Reading will wish to remain in contact with the new Commission on Multi-Ethnic Britain, set up as a direct consequence of the conference, and that they will be joined by many more. The Commission will wish to involve large numbers of people in its deliberations and work.

In the meanwhile I hope that you will enjoy reading this report. If you have comments and reflections at this stage, do please write to us: The Runnymede Trust, 11 Princelet Street, London E1 6QH.

Trevor Phillips
Chair, The Runnymede Trust
January 1995

Meera Syal

Valerie Amos

Trevor Phillips

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Overview

"People growing up like me"

" ... But then something happened called alternative comedy ... For the first time, it became unacceptable to use race to get a cheap laugh. Mocking someone simply because they're different from yourself was now too easy — and too dangerous, because of people growing up like me, a whole new generation born and brought up in Britain who were not willing to accept the insults our parents regarded as part and parcel of being black in Britain. Comedy had to develop an imagination, compassion, it had to look for the common areas, what pulled us together rather than what separated us as people. Most of all it had to look for new voices, new energy ..."

These words by TV star and writer Meera Syal touched on many of the conference's key themes. There's a whole new generation in Britain demanding that new questions should be asked and new answers given; new forms of imagination and compassion developed; new voices heard; new energies released, shaped, put to use.

Entitled *The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain: challenges, changes, and opportunities*, the conference was organised by the Runnymede Trust in partnership with the Commission for Racial Equality, the European Commission and the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Race and Community. The opening keynote speeches were made by the Home Secretary, the Rt Hon Michael Howard, and by Herman Ouseley, chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality, introduced by Rabbi Julia Neuberger. About 300 people took part. "Ladies and gentlemen, brothers and sisters," said Meera Syal at the start of her speech, "fellow optimists, because essentially that's why we are all here ..."

The conference agenda revolved round five basic questions. Briefly, these were about (1) changes in multi-ethnic Britain in recent years (2) the principal challenges and opportunities of the future (3) knowledge and experience relevant to addressing these challenges and opportunities (4) principles to guide action and (5) practical recommendations. The five questions were asked and discussed in general plenary sessions and also in six specialist workshops, concerned respectively with anti-racism, identity, immigration and citizenship, law and justice, urban policy, and work and management.

This report about the conference has three main parts. First (pages 7—16), there is an overview of the issues which were discussed. In effect, this summarises the answers which were given to the first four agenda questions mentioned above — What's been happening? What lies ahead? What do we know? How do we proceed?

Second (pages 18—41) there are extracts from some of the papers which were presented. These have been selected to give a more detailed idea of the conference's concerns and to show how the issues were treated. The authors and speakers include Michael Howard and Herman Ouseley; Trevor Phillips and Professor Bhikhu Parekh, on behalf of the Runnymede Trust; Councillor Mrs Pola Uddin, deputy leader of Tower Hamlets Borough Council; Dr Tariq Modood and Dr David Gillborn, respectively from the Policy Studies Institute and the University of London; Annette Bosscher and Fritz Wittek from Brussels, and Dr Andrée Shepherd from the University of Lyon; and Meera Syal, whose after-dinner speech has already been quoted.

Third and finally (pages 42—44), drawing on threads in both the preceding parts, there are recommendations for further action. These were collated and presented at the conference itself by Valerie Amos, deputy chair of the Runnymede Trust and managing director of Quality and Equality, a consultancy specialising in organisational development. She introduced the recommendations with a set of general overarching principles and then listed many specific action points. The first of these was that a national commission should be set up in order to explore all the topics and concerns of the conference in greater depth and to issue recommendations in greater detail and with greater authority. Such a commission is indeed being set up, as a direct consequence of the conference. The early preparatory work will be undertaken by the Runnymede Trust, funded by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust. This conference report will be on the agenda of the commission's first meeting and will be a continual point of reference.

The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain: challenges, changes and opportunities
University of Reading, 23—24 September 1994.

CONFERENCE AGENDA

1 Changes
What are the principal changes and trends of the last 10-20 years?
(a) Changes in general culture, the economy, technology and demography.
(b) Changes caused directly or indirectly by Government policy.

2 Challenges and opportunities
What are the principal challenges and opportunities requiring attention in the next 10-20 years?

3 Knowledge and experience
What practical experience is there — both in Britain and in other countries — which is relevant for responding to the challenges and opportunities of the next 10-20 years?
(a) Specific projects and strategies, their successes and failures.
(b) Research findings.

4 Principles
What principles and insights may be drawn from consideration of the three questions listed above, with a view to making practical policy for the future?

5 Recommendations
What specific recommendations do we wish to make to:
(a) Central Government?
(b) Other official and statutory bodies?
(c) Other relevant organisations and bodies?

"Trite terms"

Meera Syal recalled the inadequate and damaging stereotypes which used to be prevalent in TV comedy. "Fear," she commented, "is what propels all prejudice. It was fear that prevented those in power putting a real Asian actor in a part, putting real black people on stage singing, because the executives knew that those who entertain have great power. That is why role models are so important. I know this has become one of those trite terms that trip off the tongue at conferences such as this, but you cannot underestimate the effect on young minds that a visible and successful black person has." She continued:

"When I was growing up, there were only two Asian women on television. One was in the TV comedy *Mind Your Language*, set in an English language class at a college. My heroine was a barely literate woman in a lurid sari which looked like the scene of a traffic accident who spent most of her time knitting and saying goodness gracious me. I then looked at my mother who was round about the same age, a former university lecturer turned teacher who dressed in French silks and could quote Keats and Shelley, and occasionally said bugger when she was annoyed, and wondered where the programme makers had done their research."

Paul Boateng MP, speaking at the session on Europe

"...the abiding importance of repeating and rehearsing fundamental values and truths, and of exploring and debating the nature of a multi-ethnic good society."

Many of the texts and sections in this report, though in a range of different styles and tones of voice, are similarly about differences between imagining and reality, stereotypes and complexity; the need for all young people to feel that they are valued members of the society in which they are growing up; and the responsibilities of black and ethnic minority people who are visible and successful. All accept the risk, as Meera Syal put it, of slipping into "trite terms that trip off the tongue at conferences such as this", in order to stress the abiding importance of repeating and rehearsing fundamental values and truths, and of exploring and debating the nature of a multi-ethnic good society.

Michael Howard, Bhikhu Parekh

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Themes and Threads

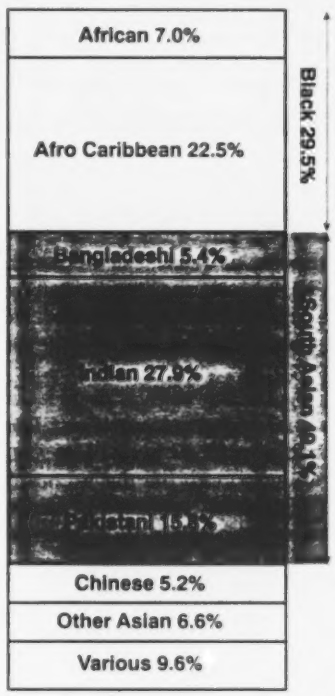
The conference contained about 30 substantial speeches or presentations prepared in advance. Also there were several hundred important contributions by conference members. Much debate was robust and vigorous. There were significant differences of opinion with regard to most of the conference themes, and also about how the debate itself should be conducted, and about the meanings, nuances and uses of key terms such as identity, ethnicity, racism, culture, pluralism, minorities, equality.

It is not possible to summarise everything which was said. Nor is it possible to provide a digest of key points which will reflect the perceptions, priorities and memories of everyone who was present. The overview presented here is inevitably selective and partial. It involves referring to seven main recurring threads or themes which ran through the conference throughout. At times these threads or themes were entirely explicit and were addressed directly. At other times they provided the backdrop against which other, more immediate matters were considered and discussed. They were and are interconnected. Nevertheless they can to an extent be considered and discussed separately. They are to do respectively with:

- the need for a new public philosophy;
- cities and accountabilities;
- employment and glass ceilings;
- the changing nature of racism;
- law, legislation and justice;
- immigration and asylum policy;
- the European context.

In the following pages each of these themes is summarised briefly in turn. There are brief quotations, as appropriate, from conference lectures and speeches. Later in the report (pages 18—41) there are lengthy extracts from several of the speeches and lectures, to provide greater detail and a fuller context.

Black and ethnic minority communities : relative sizes, 1991.



This visual summary is reprinted from the conference resource book, as are the two tabulations below. Publication details on page 49.

Table 1: OPCS summary of population by ethnicity, 1991

Ethnicity	Number in thousands	Per cent of total population	Per cent of minority population
All ethnic groups	54,889	100.0	
White	51,874	94.5	
Ethnic minority groups	3,015	5.5	100.0
Black groups	891	1.6	29.5
Black Caribbean	500	0.9	16.6
Black African	212	0.4	7.0
Black other	178	0.3	5.9
Indian	840	1.5	27.9
Pakistani	477	0.9	15.8
Bangladeshi	163	0.3	5.4
Chinese	157	0.3	5.2
Other groups			
Asian	198	0.4	6.6
Other (non Asian)	290	0.5	9.6

Table 2: alternative summary of population by ethnicity, 1991

Ethnicity	Number in thousands	Per cent of total population	Per cent of minority population
Black communities	891	1.6	29.5
African	212	0.4	7.0
Afro-Caribbean	678	1.2	22.5
South Asian communities	1,480	2.7	49.1
Bangladeshi	163	0.3	5.4
Indian	840	1.5	27.9
Pakistani	477	0.9	15.8
Other minority communities			
Chinese	157	0.3	5.2
Asian	198	0.4	6.6
Various	290	0.5	9.6
All minorities	3,015	5.5	100.0
Majority communities	51,874	94.5	—

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The need for a new public philosophy

Trevor Phillips, in his opening speech at the conference, introduced and emphasised the need to find new words to address new realities. "Racism is racism wherever you meet it", but it operates in a range of different ways and there is no single way of tackling it. It is urgent that we develop in Britain "a vocabulary which is accurate and intelligible, and leads to clarity rather than to obscurity and jargon."

In the 1950s and 1960s Britain drew its official vocabulary mainly from American ways of seeing and talking about race relations — though partly also, of course, from its own experiences and memories of empire. It was not until the late 1960s that a modern and British discourse began to develop, with the publication of *Colour and Citizenship*, a pioneering work written by Jim Rose and his co-authors and published in 1969 by the Oxford University Press. This book had a significant impact on the climate of policy-making opinion throughout the 1970s, and helped to shape the Race Relations Act of 1976. But the time has now come for a major re-think, many people at the conference maintained, in order to create a new public philosophy for the twenty-first century.

Trevor Phillips pointed out that within the next twenty years 40 per cent of the population of Greater London will belong to what are nowadays called ethnic minorities, and that this is without counting Irish and other European backgrounds. He pointed out too that there are increasing numbers of mixed relationships. "No one seriously believes in the old melting pot idea as a panacea, but racism does begin to become something quite different when your grandchildren have a different colour or different features from yourself." There are further extracts from Trevor Phillips' speech on pages 18—19.

The need for a new vocabulary and philosophy was emphasised also by Bhikhu Parekh. "The very language of race, race relations and racism," he said, "is proving blunt and inadequate. As the ethnic minorities have settled down, they have discovered new opportunities, developed new ambitions, faced new problems and opted for new modes of self-definition ... We are also developing new insights into the limits of cultural diversity and reconciling it with the legitimate demands of common citizenship within a shared public culture ... We need to rethink these issues and create a public discourse and a national consensus relevant to our times." The full text of Bhikhu Parekh's speech is on pages 20—22.

"...the balance between diversity of ethnicity, culture and religion on the one hand and the need for cohesion and shared values on the other."

Other speakers who explored issues of identity in modern society included Gita Sahgal, who is a member of Southall Black Sisters and Women Against Fundamentalism, and Petronella Breinburg, who is a research fellow at the Caribbean Centre, Goldsmiths College, University of London. A workshop at the conference on new and changing identities was chaired by Frances Jowell, who is an art historian, and reported on by Nasreen Rehman, a specialist in South Asian music. Tariq Modood referred at this workshop to four separate developments of recent years leading to the need for new discourse and definitions: the decline of what he called the "Atlantocentric model" (the tendency to see race relations in American or South African terms); the impact of ethnic assertiveness, and of socio-political movements such as feminism and gay rights; the significance of cultural racism, as distinct from racism based on physical appearance; and the ways in which identities compete and conflict with each other, not only in relationships between groups but also within each person as an individual. Tariq Modood's paper is reprinted on pages 31—32.

A new public philosophy about the nature of Britain as a multi-ethnic society will celebrate diversity, but also will clarify the balance between diversity of ethnicity, culture and religion on the one hand and the need for cohesion and shared values on the other. It will be expressed through, and also will be reinforced and underpinned by, new legislation. It will require new relationships and partnerships between central and local government, and between the public, private and voluntary sectors, and new approaches to urban policy.

Left to right: Petronella Breinburg, Gita Sahgal and Frances Jowell

Cities and accountabilities

Herman Ouseley, in his keynote address, emphasised the importance of urban policy in any consideration of Britain as a multi-ethnic society. "A few years ago," he recalled, "the so-called trickle-down approach was thought by the Government and others to be the best bet for improving the lot of black and other ethnic minority people: no race-specific programmes, just the natural benefit flowing from a stronger economy. It has not worked." The full text of his address is on pages 27—30.

A paper about urban policy was also provided by Councillor Mrs Pola Uddin, deputy leader of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, and there were presentations about the Single Regeneration Budget by Robert Hughes, chief executive of Kirklees Borough Council and Mike Medas, project officer for Sia, the national development agency for the black and ethnic minority voluntary sector. The session on urban policy was chaired by Keith Vaz MP, and included also an account of the community-based work of the Black Environment Network, given by Judy Ling Wong, the network's director. The text of Pola Uddin's paper is on pages 33—34.

Both Herman Ouseley and Pola Uddin referred to urban planning in east London, as a case-study example of failures and mistakes in recent years. "Tower Hamlets," said Pola Uddin, "provides a stark case study of what can happen when the needs of local people are subordinated to market forces. Today, we have about 3.8 million square feet of unused office space in Docklands, much of it speculatively built with the support of the London Docklands Development Corporation. At the same time, domestic overcrowding is the worst in London and unemployment is the second highest in the capital. The great majority of the jobs in Docklands have been of little or no benefit to the people of the Borough. Had local people been given a say in the redevelopment of the Docks, I am sure the story would have been very different."

Other contributors too referred to mass unemployment in inner-city areas; poor and overcrowded housing; poor health and poor access to health care; high levels of crime, disaffection and alienation; a mismatch between local skills and new jobs; a declining infrastructure; poor access to services, banks and shops; reduced resources for schools, for example through the erosion of Section 11 funding; the declining influence of equal opportunities and anti-racist policies in local government and other public services; growing support for far right political policies and parties; overt racism and racist violence; the emergence of major decision-making forums which are not democratically elected or accountable; and the inappropriateness, in many or most urban areas, of free market experiments, "trickle-down" theories of wealth transfer and "flagship" renewal projects.

It was generally agreed that the free market experiment of the last two decades has failed the inner cities. But also it was emphasised that we must learn from the experience of the post-war period and that we must not repeat the mistakes of the politicians and planners who in the 1950s and 1960s imposed technocratic, 'top down', 'we know best' solutions on local communities. It may be that the free market experiments of the last twenty years happened because post war urban planning lost touch with the real needs of the neighbourhoods and communities it was supposed to serve, and because local government became unduly bureacratic, unresponsive, wasteful and insensitive. The "charter culture" of recent years has potential for increasing the accountability of public services, it was agreed, but needs to treat people as citizens rather than merely as customers or consumers.

"Projects must be based on long-term strategies and rigorous analysis of needs; be people-driven and people-friendly; be democratically accountable; and be adequately resourced."

There is very considerable untapped human potential in the inner cities, it was pointed out, which needs to be utilised. Too often in the recent past, however, community-based projects have been set up to fail. Projects must be based on long-term strategies and rigorous analysis of needs; be people-driven and people-friendly; be democratically accountable; and be adequately resourced. Further, they must be, as the term is, "capacity-building" — they must give individuals and organisations the managerial, financial and communication skills which they need to be successful.

Within this context, there is an urgent need for the black and ethnic minority voluntary sector to be adequately resourced. This has implications for the funding policies of central and local government, of charities and trusts, and of the private sector.

Pola Uddin and Keith Vaz

Employment and glass ceilings

Philip Ward, group personnel executive at Northern Foods, provided a paper outlining major changes in recent years in the UK economy. He mentioned and emphasised the shift from manufacturing to services; the significant rise in part-time employment; the fact that companies have reduced operating costs by shedding labour and by a multi-skilling approach to those still employed; the increased numbers of redundant management grades as delayering continues; the fact that a stable career path in one company "from cradle to grave" is now much less likely than in the past; and much more emphasis on the role and work of women. All discussion of the position of black and ethnic minority people in the economy has to take into account these crucial background features.

In 1992 and 1993 unemployment rates for people of ethnic minority origin were about double those for the white population, and this difference applied, more or less, after age, sex and level of qualification were taken into account. It is clear that many employers whose practices are generally good still have an uphill battle to put equal opportunities on to their mainstream operational agenda. There is an urgent need for managers in both the public and the private sector to appreciate the business case for equal opportunities.

Many speakers at the conference referred to the existence of "glass ceilings", preventing black and ethnic minority people from reaching positions of senior management and responsibility. "White South Africa has taken down the 'Whites Only' signs", said Trevor Phillips, "but they could usefully be redeployed in Britain, to be put on the boardrooms and executive offices of corporate Britain ... Black and Asian people are locked out of the boardroom unless it's five o'clock in the morning and they're carrying a vacuum cleaner."

Beverley Bernard, director of the Windsor Fellowship, gave case-study accounts of her organisation's projects to break down glass ceilings in the private sector. Ranjit Arora, director of the Race Relations Research Unit at the University of Bradford, described a consultancy which she and others had provided in 1994, working with Anne Shaw Consultants, on behalf of the Runnymede Trust to the Department of Employment.

Civil Service Management Training

Ranjit Arora, director of the Race Relations Research Unit at Bradford, gave a case-study account of a consultancy on recruitment to a Civil Service management scheme.

Each year the Employment Department appoints up to 25 management trainees to a special fast-track promotion scheme. In 1994 it commissioned the Runnymede Trust, through Anne Shaw Consultants Ltd, to advise on equal opportunities issues at all stages of the recruitment process.

In 1993 only 8.8 per cent of ethnic minority applicants had been successful at the first stage of the sifting process and no ethnic minority applicants had been appointed to the scheme. In 1994, however, 23.8 per cent of ethnic minority applicants were successful at the first stage. Of those who were finally successful, 27.8 per cent were from ethnic minority backgrounds. The project is to be repeated in 1995.

Further information is available from the Runnymede Trust, 11 Princelet Street, London E1 6QH.

The purpose had been to monitor and modify the selection procedures for management training, in order to encourage more applications from black and ethnic minority people and ensure that the selection criteria and tests were entirely fair. The very striking result of this project had been that in 1994 almost 30 per cent of people selected for management training had been from ethnic minority backgrounds, compared with nil per cent in all previous years. The project reflected very well on the Department of Employment itself, and its lessons could valuably be applied in the private sector as well as throughout all other public services.

It was noted that the National TEC Council adopted its National Framework for Action on Equal Opportunities in May 1994 and that the CRE is providing *Ten points for action on racial equality* for all TECs and LECs, and a similar programme for modern apprenticeships. Despite this, it appears that most TECs have not yet devised effective strategies for meeting the needs of their local black and ethnic minority communities, and are in any case severely hampered by reduced funding for some of their most relevant programmes.

The conference workshop on management and the labour market was reported on by Dr Binna Kandola, director of Pearn-Kandola Occupational Psychologists, Oxford.

Philip Ward, Beverley Bernard and Ranjit Arora.

The changing nature of racism

There has in recent years been a subtle change, many speakers pointed out, in the nature and basis of racial discrimination. "Earlier," observed Bhikhu Parekh, "it was based on the crude grounds of colour, and was so patently offensive that even the perpetrators felt a sense of shame about it. Nowadays racial discrimination involves a subtle system of exclusion based on the dubious ideas of who is and is not one of us. The Jews, the blacks, the Asians and others are considered cultural outsiders, 'not one of us', not legitimate members of the national family. Their exclusion and the consequent discrimination against them are deemed to be fully justified as legitimate acts of cultural self-defence."

Professor Parekh pointed out that in consequence discriminatory acts do not evoke an appropriate sense of guilt and shame, and that they even seem to enjoy sympathy and understanding amongst influential sections of British society. He went on to emphasise that discriminatory treatment of this kind breeds in its victims "a mood of despondency, weakens ambition and drive, and leads to much suppressed anger and frustration."

The emergence of "cultural racism", as it is sometimes known, has happened at much the same time that there has been a decline in the responsibilities and influence of local government. This is significant since it was primarily in local government that anti-racism was developed in the 1980s, particularly through equal opportunities policies. But "just as racism changes," said David Gillborn, "so antiracism must develop ... Our understandings of race and ethnicity must be more flexible and sophisticated. Rather than dumping anti-racism, we should get better at it." This was the essential emphasis also in the presentation made by Naina Patel, head of the "race" programme run by the Council for Education and Training in Social Work.

Newer forms of racism rely on appeals to culture rather than to physical features such as colour, and assert the importance of difference. But despite the absence of biological or genetic categories, said David Gillborn, the effects of such assumptions are racist since they operate systematically to disadvantage ethnic minority groups. "Talk of 'the nation', 'our heritage' and 'tradition' often operates as a code for race issues: it can translate into policy decisions which treat Britain as if it were a solid homogeneous block where everyone shares the same religion, the same tongue and the same set of aspirations. Those who do not fit the assumed profile are at best seen as an inconvenience, at worst, a threat. The 'new' racism is a persuasive and subtle force for which conventional antiracism is ill equipped."

What is needed, it was said, is "critical anti-racism". This will be more sophisticated in identifying new forms of racism and also more self-critical in its recognition of the limits of success and the likelihood of mistakes. It will recognise that "race" and ethnicity are not separate from factors such as class and gender, and that they are not always the most important features in any one particular situation; and it will be based on a realistic and hard-nosed understanding that, as David Gillborn put it, "there are no angels or devils — just humans." Stimulating and detailed accounts of such anti-racism in practice were given at the conference by Harcourt Alleyne and Noel Penstone from the London Borough of Greenwich, about community-based youth work, and by Naina Patel about the materials developed for the training of social workers. The session on antiracism was chaired by Clifford Headley, director of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Race and Community, deputising for Diane Abbott MP.

Working with young people

Harcourt Alleyne and Noel Penstone, from the London Borough of Greenwich's race equality unit, gave a case-study presentation about Greenwich's work with young people.

Following the murder of Rolan Adams in 1991 and an accompanying escalation of racist violence, Greenwich commissioned an in-depth study of youth culture, racism and education. Based upon work with young white people during 1992, it was undertaken by Dr Roger Hewitt of the University of London Institute of Education. He concluded that anti-racist work should recognise that many young white people are extremely agitated and confused, and that their racism is related to their need for a sense of identity and pride. Materials based on this research, entitled Sagaland, were published by Greenwich Council in November 1992 and reprinted in March 1993.

For further information about Sagaland, and about the next stages in Greenwich's work: Central Race Equality Unit, London Borough of Greenwich, 29/37 Wellington Street, Woolwich, London, SE18 6PW.

Antiracism in professional training

Naina Patel, head of the race programme run by the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work (CCETSW) gave a case-study account of the innovative materials and programmes which CCETSW has developed in recent years for the training of social workers.

CCETSW Council has formally built antiracism into general regulations for preparing social workers to practise competently in a modern multi-racial society. In 1988 the Council agreed to an anti-racism policy which covered CCETSW's three main functions: as an employer, as a validating body, and as a body with a developmental role.

The need to support academics, practice teachers and students with the necessary tools became urgent. The Northern Curriculum Development Project (CD Project) was therefore designed. It involved some 400 people, including 30 authors, and produced seven publications. In addition CCETSW has organised many other antiracist projects and initiatives.

For further information: CCETSW Publications, Derbyshire House, St Chad's Street, London WCIH 8AD.

Law, legislation and justice

There was much discussion at the conference of the criminal justice system and of the very serious problems of racial violence and harassment. Speakers included Lord Lester QC and Paul Whitehouse, chief constable of Sussex Police, who was taking part in the conference on behalf of the Association of Chief Police Officers. The workshop on law was chaired by Dr Marie Stewart, of Taylor Stewart Associates, and also involved David Forbes, from the Quaker Committee on Racial Justice, based in Brussels.

Racial discrimination and prejudice were considered to be widespread within the criminal justice system at every stage, from policing through prosecuting, decisions about bail, trial, sentencing and imprisonment. Although there was some disagreement as to whether racially motivated violence and harassment should be specific offences, it was agreed that there must be much more effective measures, involving the police and the Crown Prosecution Service, to tackle racially motivated offences against the person. There must be accurate recording of racial attacks and means of encouraging victims to complain. It was suggested that it would be sensible to develop a system of mediators to help to prevent oppressive behaviour and intimidation resulting in physical violence. There was scepticism about using the criminal justice system as the only means of tackling these problems.

It was noted that there had been a rapid increase in the recording by the police of racist incidents, but that this does not necessarily reflect an increase in the numbers of such incidents. The British Crime Survey did not show an increase in the underlying trend; certainly, however, there has been a change in recording practices and priorities. There is a lack of confidence among ethnic minorities in the apparent fairness and impartiality of the justice system, not only of members of the police service but also judges, both in senior courts and in magistrates courts. The problem of all-white juries trying crimes involving black victims or black defendants was also discussed.

The conference noted the progress that had been made during the last four years in training judges in racial awareness at seminars organised by the Judicial Studies Board. However, it was pointed out that this training is still in its early stages and that more ambitious schemes are needed. It noted too that there had been a real increase in the number of ethnic minority police officers but considered that this left no room for complacency. It was recognised that police prejudice is part of the wider prejudice in the population at large within a highly prejudiced society. There is a need for public education programmes, especially for those within the age range 14 to 25.

It was suggested that there should be more effective redress against racially prejudiced decisions by the courts. A new appeal review machinery on the lines recommended by the Runciman Commission would be very important in this context. It was also suggested that there should be proper monitoring of sentencing to evaluate the extent to which it is racially biased.

Discussion focused on the denial of effective access to civil as well as criminal justice because of reductions in legal aid and other means of obtaining representation and pursuing cases. This makes it more difficult to use housing, education, employment and environmental laws in ways which could benefit ethnic minorities. It was agreed that monitoring is crucial but that it has to be conducted in a way that is appropriate in its language and of demonstrable practical value. Monitoring categories should be applied consistently to enable comparisons to be made across the system, with a clear commitment to taking remedial action.

The scope of the Race Relations Act should be extended so as to reverse the effect of the majority decision of the House of Lords in Re Amin (1983) 2 AC 818 and to include the provision of all public services, including the functions of the police, prison and immigration services. The Commission for Racial Equality should have monitoring powers equivalent to those of the Fair Employment Commission set up under the Fair Employment (Northern Ireland) Acts of 1976 and 1989.

There needs to be a non-racist concept of European citizenship. The Treaty of European Union should be amended so as to forbid racial as well as nationality and gender discrimination, securing equal rights for all European citizens, irrespective of their colour, race, nationality or ethnic origins. All organisations and individuals concerned with racial equality need to involve themselves in the inter-governmental conference process for 1996.

Marie Stewart, Paul Whitehouse

Immigration and asylum policy

One of the workshops at the conference was concerned specifically with issues of immigration policy. It was chaired by Claude Moraes, director of the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, and discussed contributions by Beth Ginsburg, who is currently involved in a research project sponsored by the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe, "Comparative approaches to multiculturalism in Europe: philosophies, policies and practices"; John Nieuwenhuysen, director of the Bureau of Immigration and Population Research in Australia; and Sarah Spencer, research fellow at the Institute for Public Policy Research and editor and coordinator of the recent book *Strangers and Citizens: a positive approach to migrants and refugees*. The rapporteur was Jim Rose, co-founder of the Runnymede Trust and co-author of the seminal book of an earlier generation, *Colour and Citizenship*.

The first and fundamental emphasis from this workshop was that racial equality will not be achieved in the UK unless the Government reforms immigration policy, including the ways it is administered and the ways it is presented by politicians. Immigration controls are necessary. But current policy, far from contributing to good race relations, undermines them by reinforcing negative attitudes. It follows that those campaigning for racial equality must address the need for reform of immigration policy and practice if they want to succeed.

The content of immigration policy should be changed in two key respects. First, international human rights standards should be seen by the Government as guidelines to good practice, not as awkward obstacles to be overcome. Second, the Government should be proud to honour its obligations under human rights conventions and state firmly that it will ensure that it will not divide children from their parents, or husbands from wives, and will protect those fleeing persecution.

It would be very valuable if an official body — an "Immigration Watchdog", so to speak —were to be set up to monitor policy and practice on immigration, nationality and asylum, and to advise the Government on reforms needed to bring policy and practice into line with international human rights standards.

We need in Britain, it was agreed, to learn from the approach in Australia and Canada where detailed research is carried out on the economic and social impact of immigration so that entry controls are based not on ill-founded assumptions that immigrants take jobs or boost unemployment but on facts about their true impact. A body should be established along the lines of the Bureau of Immigration and Population Research in Australia to conduct research on the economic and social impact of immigration. This would be independent of, but funded by, Government. One of its first tasks would be to organise a consultation exercise. This would involve all interested parties — including employers, unions, ethnic minority communities, public bodies and institutions — about the content of immigration policy.

With regard to the presentation of policy, political leaders at national and local level should exercise public leadership to change the terms of the debate on immigrants and refugees. "Black immigration will continue to be firmly near the top of the race equality agenda," said Claude Moraes, "not least because it will continue to be used by political parties to create fear, and gain political advantage. Or it will be excluded from some political agendas for fear that it is a vote loser if discussed in positive terms." Nevertheless political leaders should try to shape, not merely follow, public opinion. They should celebrate the positive contributions of migrants and refugees, and recognise the value of symbolic gestures, for example visiting victims of racist attack.

Immigration policy: resources

A summary of *Strangers and Citizens: a positive approach to migrants and refugees*, edited by Sarah Spencer, is available free of charge from the Institute for Public Policy Research, 30—32 Southampton Street, London WC2E 7RA. The book itself costs £14. 95 plus 50p postage. Information about the work of the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI) is available from JCWI at 115 Old Street, London EC1V 9JR.

Claude Moraes, Sarah Spencer, Beth Ginsburg.

European dimensions

One of the plenary sessions at the conference was devoted specifically to recalling the wider European context in which policy-making and decision-making in Britain necessarily take place. It was addressed by three speakers based in Brussels, Diana Brittan, Annette Bosscher and Fritz Wittek, and also by Dr Andrée Shepherd from Université Lumière in Lyon, Nirmalya Bandopadhay, senior executive officer at the Commission for Racial Equality, and Paul Boateng MP, vice chairman of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Race and Community. In addition, the European dimension was implicitly or explicitly present in virtually every other plenary session as well, and in all the workshops. The Home Secretary, for example, devoted a significant part of his speech to Britain's position within the European Union, and the consequent tasks and responsibilities as he saw them.

Annette Bosscher, based at the European Commission in Brussels, introduced the *Communication on Immigration and Asylum Policies* which was published in February 1994, and which sets out four main sets of policies: to improve the legal situation of third country nationals; to create economic and socio-cultural conditions conducive to successful integration; to provide information and stimulate dialogue; and to combat racial discrimination and xenophobia. Also she outlined the Commission's 1994 White Paper entitled *European Social Policy — a way forward for the Union*, particularly its sections on "integration of immigrants" and "combating racism and xenophobia".

Fritz Wittek outlined the Commission's role with particular regard to education. He acknowledged that the Commission's use of language (for example, the continual use of terms such as "migrants' children", "the integration of immigrants", and so on) is unhelpful and unsatisfactory, but emphasised that a range of valuable new projects and policy initiatives is being undertaken at the European level. The Commission's work is "not revolutionary", he admitted, "but it is solid stuff, extending way beyond the limits of the assimilationist or segregationalist thinking that the use of the term 'migrants' children' might suggest to a sceptical reader."

Annette Bosscher

"Who can swear that the extreme right will remain marginal? ... The best way to guard against the danger ... may well be at European level — to influence and support the antiracist agenda of the European Parliament and the European Commission, so as to build a tolerant, multi-cultural, multi-ethnic Europe."

Andrée Shepherd gave a chilling account of the rise of the *Front National* in France over the last twenty years. "You may well say", she commented, "but this is France. Yes, but one must beware of too smug an attitude — remember that 20 years ago Le Pen only scored 0.7 per cent in the presidential election. The British far right remains marginalised, but some of its ideas, notably on immigration, have pervaded mainstream politics ... Who can swear that the extreme right will remain marginal? With the opening of frontiers and the increased pressure of the "refugee problem" on European countries with low birth rates, there is a potential danger — the *Front National* clearly identified this as a golden opportunity to extend its influence in France. The best way to guard against the danger of an extension of covert and overt racism may well be at European level — to influence and support the antiracist agenda of the European Parliament and the European Commission, so as to build a tolerant, multi-cultural, multi-ethnic Europe."

This emphasis on action at the European level was taken up and emphasised by Nirmalya Bandopadhay, who outlined the work of an independent group of experts, the Starting Line Group. The group has drawn up proposals for amending the European Community Treaty so that it contains an explicit pledge to eliminate discrimination "against persons or groups of persons, whether citizens of the European Union or not, on the grounds of race, colour, religion, or national, social or ethnic origin, and the promotion of harmonious relations between such persons or groups of persons." It was agreed that all organisations and individuals concerned with aspects of multi-ethnic Britain should involve themselves in the inter-governmental conference process for 1996.

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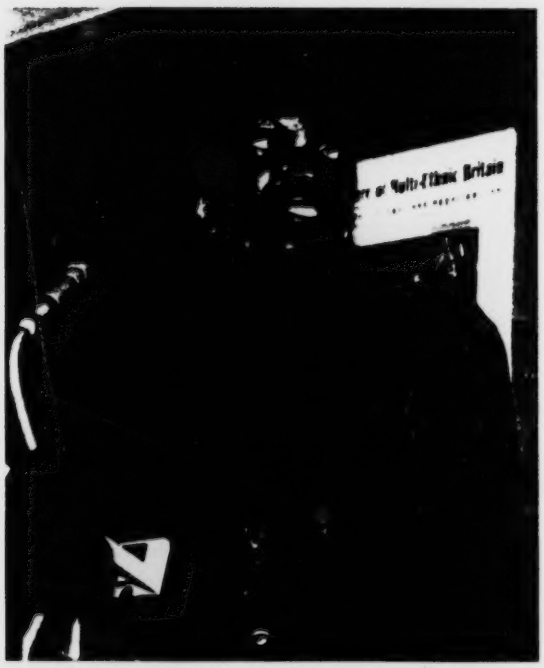
Left to right:
Paul Boateng MP, Jane Hunter (Nottingham), Robin Richardson (Runnymede Trust) and Margaret Simmons-Bird (Avon).

Left to right:
Jim Rose, Trevor Phillips and Lord Lester

Joan Todd and Lola Henry (Runnymede Trust)

Valerie Amos



Texts and papers

The next main section of this report contains several of the lectures, speeches and papers which were presented at the conference. They show the contexts in which the general threads and themes of the conference were considered and discussed, and show or imply that there was plenty of disagreement, criticism and debate. They show too, to quote Meera Syal's speech again, some of the main ways in which the conference looked for "the common areas, what pulled us together rather than what separated us ... new voices, new energy ..."

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Purpose and Context

Trevor Phillips

Trevor Phillips is chairman of the Runnymede Trust and at the time of the conference was head of current affairs at London Weekend Television. Before joining LWT in 1980 he was president for two years of the National Union of Students.

It is my duty and privilege to welcome you to what I fully expect to be a unique occasion. Before I say anything more about the conference itself I should like to thank the vice chancellor and administration of Reading University for their warm welcome and their help in organising this venue. I have, as it happens, been here at Reading before, standing on a podium rather like this, making a speech. But I should admit that was some years ago when, rather than addressing an eminently respectable audience of peers, politicians and professionals in the guise of the chair of the Runnymede Trust, I was president of a less sobersided organisation, the National Union of Students, and I was urging several hundred students to occupy the vice chancellor's office. Perhaps had he known that, we might today have been meeting elsewhere. But I promise that I shall not be urging you to occupy anything other than this rather comfortable lecture theatre.

We shall be joined through our two days here by experts and speakers of the highest quality and significance. But at the heart of what I hope we shall achieve will be your contributions, especially in the workshops. From these sessions, given the composition of this conference, we shall hear ideas on the future of our society which are both substantive and innovative.

The context in which we meet

The Runnymede Trust's role as an independent charity concerned with racial equality and justice is well known to most of you. Our aims have been similar for two and half decades. But we are no longer narrowly concerned with race and colour, nor are our interests purely domestic.

Earlier this year, for example, our commission on anti-semitism highlighted an alarming rise in the numbers of anti-Jewish incidents. Its report *A Very Light Sleeper* showed that discrimination is not a simple matter of colour in the 1990s, even if it ever was. And in a continent where ethnicity — dare I say tribalism perhaps? — has become as dominant and motivating a force for conflict as ideology was for two generations, it would be absurd to imagine that we can think of ethnicity without thinking of events in Europe.

The conference resource book, *Multi-Ethnic Britain — Facts and Trends*, offers some valuable insights into what is taking place in our society. It demonstrates that society as a whole has moved forward. But on almost every front — employment, education, the criminal justice system, politics — Britain has yet to establish systems and institutions which guarantee racial equality and justice.

Language

Perhaps the most fundamental for a gathering such as this is language. Racism is racism wherever you meet it. But the manner in which it operates and the way in which we tackle it doesn't have to be the same everywhere.

For many years, through the 1950s and 60s, Britain relied heavily on American models and transatlantic concepts. Then at the start of Runnymede's existence our former chairman Jim Rose created a new British vocabulary with *Colour and Citizenship*. It was badly needed and survived intact and valid for twenty years. Much of it is still valid. But since then we've borrowed yet again from the USA, and I fear even less appropriately than in the past. Ideas about what it means to be black, notions of electoral power, questions of law, affirmative action and so forth all have their British reflections. These are similar but are not quite the same. Describing them as though they were the same can often make them more difficult to discuss rather than easier.

In the US the word minority means something when you counterpose a Caucasian majority with an African-American or Hispanic or Asian minority. But what does minority mean when, within our lifetime, 40 per cent of London's people will be people of colour from several different ethnic backgrounds? (And that's leaving out the families of Irish immigrants to London.) So where is the majority? And if we can't accurately define a majority, where is the minority?

There are several crucial factors which are peculiar to the British situation. Amongst them our numbers -relatively small compared with the USA; the historical relationships between Britain and the countries from which ethnic minorities in the UK originate; the range of minorities here, as opposed to North America; the lack of a written constitutional framework; our changed relationship with the rest of Europe casts questions of citizenship and immigration in a new light; and, very importantly, demographics.

"...racism does begin to become something quite different when your grandchildren have a different colour or different features to you."

In the USA until recently there have been, relatively speaking, few mixed relationships. Here amongst African-Caribbean people one quarter are said to be in mixed relationships. That means that many tens of thousands of families who thought of themselves as white are no longer wholly "white" families. It is also possible that within our lifetime the majority of the people we call black or Afro Caribbean will actually be of mixed heritage. No one seriously believes in the old melting pot idea as a panacea, but racism does begin to become something quite different when your grandchildren have a different colour or different features to you.

Our language of minorities tends to deal principally with ethnicity and race. But in the UK cultural minorities may now be just as significant. Islam is the fastest growing religion and claims over a million adherents. It is already clear that certain cultural minorities pose as significant a set of questions for society as do racial or ethnic minorities. All of these questions demand that a vocabulary should be devised which is accurate, intelligible and leads to clarity rather than obscurity and jargon.

Special and unique

Of course, whatever language you use it is clear that Britain's minorities have begun to carve out a place in the society as a whole. Where members of the minority communities have opportunity to compete unfettered by prejudice they shine and show that they too have something special and unique to bring to the party, as they say. And very often that something special comes directly from their particular ethnic background — a facility with languages, a capacity for public service, an unusual understanding of certain parts of the world. We don't just have to quote the prominent like Linford Christie or Zeinab Badawi, or perhaps more controversially Mr Salman Rushdie, to justify the contribution of the newer minorities. It is all around us every day, at work, at school, in our communities.

But there are limits to equality, it seems. And the limits seem to coincide with the point in any organisation or profession where real power is exercised. Let's look at some examples:

- The civil service : 2.1% of top staff are minorities as opposed to three times that proportion in the population; only 50% of whites are in lower administrative grades compared to 71% of blacks
- Four circuit judges out of 510, 11 recorders out of 866
- A cursory look at the FT 100 produces some executives from companies set up on their own — principally by Asian business people. But minorities are absent at the top levels of the great companies or the public sector monopolies.

The television industry

But is this just inevitable with a young community? Will things improve as the years pass? I fear not unless we find new and creative ways of promoting racial equality. Let me explain why. Take an industry where things move quickly, where the average age is young, where there's been expansion in the past and where there is constant movement of people, where the turnover of staff should allow for change to take place quickly – TV. I can talk about this having been in it for nearly fifteen years.

There are now black people in front of the camera. Representationally things are better. We no longer have to call up our friends to report the latest sightings of a black person in a quality drama or in a current affairs programme or even in a soap opera. Some of the biggest talents in British TV are black — Lenny Henry, John Fashanu, Jaye Griffiths, Trevor MacDonald, Moira Stuart. But few wield power. (Lenny Henry perhaps is an exception; he used his box office power to force the BBC to commission his production company with black staff and writers. Good for him – but there are few who can pull it off.)

Below these stratospheric levels there are researchers and producers and even directors. But on the executive floors — where real decisions about scheduling, programme style and tone are made — there are virtually no black faces. Despite the growing number of black faces on screen, amongst the hundreds of TV programme executives who wield power in the BBC, ITV and Channel 4, there are only four non-whites – and two of these deal exclusively with programmes for minorities.

TV thinks of itself as modern and meritocratic, and a mirror on the nation. Yet it is just as exclusive as the rest of British industry and government. By the way, all four of the non-whites I've been talking about started in the same place – making minority programmes for London Weekend in the early eighties. It is a damning indictment that in more than a decade the industry has not moved on, and that no other company has taken the initiative to build a more representative management. Though the four of us are friends, we, like American presidents and their vice presidents avoid travelling together for the sake of the industry; were we to be involved in an accident the power structure of British TV would be whiter than that of South Africa.

This is a picture that would be recognisable in virtually every walk of like in Britain. The fact is that black and Asian people are locked out of the boardroom unless it's five o'clock in the morning and they're carrying a vacuum cleaner.

Part of Runnymede's role is to be an independent forum, one which speaks out but also listens, and gives people the chance to listen to each other. These two days are, we hope, the start of a dialogue which will go on in various forms for as long as it takes to come up with answers to the problems which stand between us and achievement of our aims.

Setting the Agenda

Bhikhu Parekh

Bhikhu Parekh is professor of political theory at the University of Hull, and a trustee of the Runnymede Trust. He was vice-chancellor of the University of Baroda, 1981—84, and deputy chair of the Commission for Racial Equality, 1985—90.

A political audit

An occasion which brings together over 250 people active in the field of race relations is clearly of considerable importance. Its importance is both acknowledged and enhanced by the Home Secretary's presence. His background and experience ideally equip him to understand our concerns. He may not have always done what we wanted, but he has attended more meetings of this kind than some of his predecessors, has listened to our arguments and has engaged in a dialogue with us. This is an earnest of his commitment to the cause of good race relations in Britain and we warmly welcome him as a friend.

This is a good opportunity to undertake a political audit of the progress we have made so far, and to ask what kind of multi-ethnic society we wish to create in Britain, how far we fall short of it, why, and what we need to do to remove the obstacles which still stand in our way. I shall first concentrate on the progress we have made, and then talk about the task which still awaits us.

Afro-Caribbeans and Asians constitute just over five per cent of the British population, yet their contribution to the various areas of British life has been very considerable. Asians form just over three per cent of the population but provide nearly 18 per cent of our GPs, just over 20 per cent of our hospital doctors and over 60 per cent of our retail traders. Their children continue to do reasonably well in our schools and colleges, and many of our research laboratories would find it difficult to function in their absence. As for Afro-Caribbeans, they have begun to do reasonably well in our educational institutions and are making an impact on our professional and political life. Their contribution to our literature and popular culture is considerable. And I need hardly remind anyone here that they provide nearly a fifth of our top athletes, a quarter of our cricket and soccer teams and a third of our top boxers. It is a great tribute to their determination and wisdom that their children, whose educational underachievement caused acute public concern in the mid 1970s, now have attainments which are only one per cent behind the national average.

Between them the two communities have deeply shaped the sporting, shopping and commercial culture of Britain, and brought to it a new energy, and a new spirit of exuberance and enterprise. Every community, including Britain, has a tendency from time to time to become a little stale and tired and needs a new source of energy and vitality. Afro-Caribbeans and Asians have supplied this in plenty and made a most valuable contribution to the spiritual regeneration of Britain. Few communities in the long history of this country have offered so much in such a short time against so many odds.

Part of the credit for this must go to the two communities themselves. Like all immigrants, they were determined to succeed in their new environment, to give their children a better life than they had themselves enjoyed, and to deserve well of the country that had given them a home. But they would not have achieved what they did without the help of the anti-racist legislation enacted by successive governments, the support of countless determined and well-meaning white friends, and the basic decency of British society itself.

All this points to the progress we have made in creating a relaxed multi-ethnic society in Britain. The ethnic minorities are no longer as much reseated as before, their existential legitimacy is not in question, and none but a madman would dare talk of repatriation. Even Norman Tebbit's cricket test sounds like a perverse echo of a past that we have long left behind. There is also now a greater awareness in society at large of the racial discrimination suffered by the ethnic minorities, and a greater determination in influential circles to do something about it. There is also a greater appreciation of the fact that racist forces are still at large and that, unless they are countered, British society will invite much trouble and even violence. Prince Charles has spoken of his desire to be a defender of 'faiths' and not just of the Church of England, and to give the plurality of British society an official recognition.

Violence and discrimination

While we have made some progress, we still have a long way to go. Racial violence and harassment are at an alarming level. The British Crime Survey concluded that there were around 130,000 racial incidents in 1992. Each of them affected a family of four or five members, and directly or indirectly caused distress to nearly *half* the ethnic minority population. The number of incidents is worrying enough; the depth of hatred which sometimes accompanies them is even more disturbing. Some of the incidents are particularly vicious, most others are accompanied by crudest abuses, and all collectively make the lives of their victims a veritable hell.

Racial discrimination also continues to remain fairly high, and is taking insidious forms. There is not one area of life where it is totally absent, be it higher education, the judiciary or the professions. While the incidence of racial discrimination is relatively low at the lower rungs of the occupational hierarchy, it increases as we move up the ladder, with the result that very few blacks and Asians are to be found in positions of influence and power, as Trevor Phillips has eloquently highlighted. The Study Group of the Society of Clinical Psychologists recently reported that Jewish Consultants and Senior House Officers suffered six times more discrimination and suspension than their 'white' counterparts, and have in several cases been unfairly denied promotion. One doctor reported that in the operating theatre he was often referred to as 'that Jew' and was subjected to offensive remarks.

Other ethnic minorities have similar stories to tell. What happened at St George's Hospital Medical School and at Glasgow University's School of Dentistry a few years age is too well-known to need reiteration. A member of the British Medical Association's General Council recently observed that Indian students were a third less likely to get into medical schools, and nine times less likely to land top jobs. Recent surveys have shown that black and Asian doctors' applications for jobs suffer four to five times the rejection rate of their counterparts, and that blacks and Asians find it extremely difficult to get pupilage in well-established all-white chambers.

There is a subtle change in the nature and basis of racial discrimination. Earlier it was based on the crude grounds of colour, and was so patently offensive that even the perpetrators felt a sense of shame about it. Nowadays racial discrimination involves a subtle system of exclusion based on the dubious ideas of who is and is not one of us. The Jews, the blacks, the Asians and others are considered cultural outsiders, 'not one of us', not legitimate members of the national family. Their exclusion and the consequent discrimination against them are deemed to be fully justified as legitimate acts of cultural self-defence. The discriminatory acts do not therefore evoke the sense of guilt and shame that they should, and even seem to enjoy the sympathy and understanding of some of the influential sections of British society. Since the victims of such discriminatory treatment are products of the British educational system, it hurts them more than it otherwise would. They possess the same qualifications as the rest, and sometimes more, and wonder what more they can do. This breeds a mood of despondency, weakens ambition and drive, and leads to much suppressed anger and frustration.

There was a time from the mid-1970s to the early 1980s when we were moving towards a genuinely multi-cultural education, which both cherished minority identities and instilled values of common citizenship. It promised to produce culturally bilingual adults both secure in their inherited identities and capable of conversing in the shared language of British public life. Many of us feel that during the last few years the national vision has shrunk and is dominated by a misguided view of national identity which devalues and marginalises minority communities. The consequences are there for all to see. There is a cultural panic among the minority communities. Intergenerational trust and continuity are weakened, with the result that the youth lacks a sense of security, self-esteem and rootedness. Since the educational institutions do not provide for minority cultural needs, these are met by ill-equipped and unduly but understandably defensive religious and other organisations, who sometimes encourage archaic and even fundamentalist ideas.

Disintegration

As the minority communities panic and become despondent, they begin to disintegrate. The spirit of self-help and the self-confidence which once stood them in good stead and which made possible the considerable contributions to which I referred earlier begin to decline. Those who can break away from their communities do so, leaving the rest without help and encouragement. Victims of the economic recession, smarting under a sense of injustice, and devoid of role models, the unsuccessful ones form a disturbing economic and cultural underclass, vulnerable to drugs, self-directed violence, alcoholism and so forth, as well as to the exploitation of unscrupulous operators. This is true both of Afro-Caribbeans and of Asians. Contrary to general impression, the incidence of alcoholism, domestic violence, suicide, divorce and disintegration of families among the Asians is quite high and steadily rising.

Comparisons

Racism is legitimised differently in different cultural traditions which cannot therefore be compared in abstract terms. For example, French racism is ethnically more tolerant but culturally more oppressive than its British counterpart. If one masters the French language and culture, one is likely to be accepted as an equal, and one's colour matters little. This is not the case in Britain. This explains why, although France has during the last two decades witnessed four times as many racial killings as Britain and has a weaker anti-discrimination law, Arabs and Blacks occupy far higher positions in French universities, public life, civil service and government than do their counterparts in Britain.

Dutch racism is different from both, and although it is less vicious than either it is far more exclusive and does not allow immigrants to rise to high positions. All this means that while we have not done too badly in Britain compared to other European countries we have not done all that well either.

Agenda for action

What then should we do about all this? The Home Secretary will shortly be outlining his vision. In the meantime I take the liberty of suggesting the following. First, as I said earlier, the ethnic minorities in Britain are helping to regenerate its cultural and spiritual life, and could contribute much more if they were given encouragement and equal opportunities. Their presence needs to be welcomed, their contribution appreciated, and their frustrations acknowledged. We therefore need a change in the political climate. Rather than resent or accept the minorities as a regrettable fact of our social life, we need to celebrate diversity, welcome plural ways of life, and build this into our conception of British national identity. The government has a vital role to play in creating such a climate.

Second, we must give top priority to stamping out racial violence and harassment. Some of us have argued that making it a separate offence would help. It is obviously not a panacea, however, and it is not without its difficulties. But on balance it is worth a try. Many well-intentioned men and women disagree. But unless they come up with alternatives, they remain open to the sometimes unmerited suspicion of not taking racial violence with the required degree of seriousness.

Third, we must find effective ways of eliminating racial discrimination. The CRE has asked for new powers and proposed amendments to the Race Relations Act 1976. It is about time its request were conceded. The law is a blunt instrument, however, and we need to find new ways of coaxing, cajoling and pressuring employers, highlighting good practices and mobilising consumer pressure against persistent defaulters. In this context the CRE's recent initiatives under Herman Ouseley's leadership deserve widespread support.

Jim Rose

Fourth, we have now reached a point when the old ways of discussing race relations appear dated. The very language of race, race relations and racism is proving blunt and inadequate. As the ethnic minorities have settled down, they have discovered new opportunities, developed new ambitions, faced new problems, and opted for new modes of self-definition. British society's perception of them is also undergoing profound changes. Further, we are developing new insights into the limits of cultural diversity and into ways of reconciling it with the legitimate demands of common citizenship within a shared public culture.

It is about time these and related issues were carefully thought through and a new public philosophy developed. Jim Rose and his associates set the parameters of public debate on race in 1969 in their monumental *Colour and Citizenship*. We need to rethink these issues and create a public discourse and a national consensus relevant to our times. The task could best be executed by a national commission drawing its membership from all walks of life and all political persuasions. Perhaps the Runnymede Trust could take the initiative. I hope I will not be accused of favouritism in recommending a body of which I am a trustee. The Runnymede Trust has been ably led over the years by committed people, including Jim Rose, the Grand Old Man of the race field; Anthony Lester, the brain behind the Race Relations Act 1976, who radically reconstructed the Trust; and latterly by Trevor Phillips, who has brought to the Trust's management his characteristic energy and determination.

Finally, the race-related liberal constituency which fought racist ideas and helped create anti-racist legislation in the 1960s and 1970s has all but disappeared. Not only are blacks and Asians disunited, but also there is no national alliance of blacks, Asians and whites. In its absence race issues lack acknowledged spokespersons, a popular backing and a forum for public discussion. We need to find ways of recreating a broad-based race-related constituency that could regularly monitor Britain's racial health and provide a powerful counterweight to racist forces.

Lest we should become complacent about good relations, we must constantly remind ourselves that it was one of the most civilised countries in Europe that set up gas chambers, and also that most of the rest of Europe did little to help the victims. Racist sentiments are easily aroused and mobilised, and need to be constantly fought.

The ideas which I have sketched so far are not intended to provide an agenda but to indicate the directions in which we need to move. Since the Home Secretary has taken a keen interest in the subject and invited fresh thinking, I have taken this opportunity to propose a few ideas based on my twenty years of public involvement in the field of race relations. Like the rest of this distinguished audience, I look forward to his speech with keen anticipation and invite him to deliver it.

Government policy

The Rt Hon Michael Howard MP

Michael Howard is Secretary of State for the Home Department. Previously he was Secretary of State for the Environment, 1992—93, and Secretary of State for Employment, 1990—92.

Introduction

I am grateful to have been invited here today to address this important conference on the future of multi-ethnic Britain.

Over the last eighteen months there has been a substantial debate, both within ethnic minority communities and beyond, about the position of ethnic minorities in our society: their needs, their role and their responsibilities. The debate has — at least in the public arena — revolved around racial attacks and harassment and the supposed threat of electoral success by extreme right wing racist groups. Behind the scenes, however, much work has gone on in considering the effectiveness of race relations legislation, and how best to provide Government support, financial or otherwise, to help ensure that ethnic minorities can play their full part in Britain in the nineties and beyond.

The position of ethnic minority communities

Our starting point must be that race relations are generally good in the UK. This is an enormous tribute to the good sense and common decency of the overwhelming majority of our fellow citizens. Unfortunately there is a small minority who do not share those values, and the harm which they can do means that we cannot afford to be complacent and must retain a strong framework of law and clearly stated policies. But such people are a small minority. In most people there are basic values of fairness and decency to draw on in encouraging a society of genuine equal opportunities. It is our task to build on those values in promoting good race relations. There have been many successes and signs of progress which I find very encouraging. Research shows that the majority of people believe that prejudice is declining, and that there is increasing support for strong race relations policies, particularly among young people.

And you only have to look around you to see evidence of remarkable entrepreneurship and individual success: business, the media, sport, entertainment and the arts, academia, public administration. It is a measure of the progress that has been made that that kind of success is hardly remarkable any more.

Young people from ethnic minorities are now coming through the higher educational system in much larger numbers and in some cases in higher proportions for their ethnic group than for the white population. That has enormous implications for what this generation will achieve and for the example and encouragement they can provide to others.

Would we realistically have expected these levels of academic and professional success a generation ago, in the mid-sixties? I'm not at all sure that we would have done. We must be careful not to overlook progress simply because it is gradual and because there is still more to do.

Certainly there remain areas where some communities are significantly disadvantaged, particularly in employment. But it is difficult, and potentially dangerous, to generalise. The issues surrounding racial discrimination and prejudice are complex ones, and do not lend themselves to easy or complacent responses. For too long we have perhaps been locked into particular ways of looking at the issues and failing to grasp the changes, including the changing composition of the ethnic minority populations themselves. In 1981, the ethnic minority population was 2.1 million. It has grown at a rate of about 90,000 a year, until by 1991 it had reached just over three million. That said, I should add that by 1991 nearly a quarter of non-white minorities did not fit themselves into any of the neat categories provided in the Census.

Whether you measure education, employment, or any other factor, different minority communities will be at different points. And so, of course, are individuals within these communities. It is time, I think, to recognise publicly that ethnic minorities, like other groups in British society have a range of strengths, needs, skills and difficulties all of which must be taken account of if they are to contribute fully to the society of which they are a part.

This conference

Against this context I think it is particularly valuable for the Runnymede Trust to have brought you here together. I am pleased to see that the conference has an ambitious and forward-looking aim. Looking at the draft agenda for the working groups I see that you are being asked to address five particular issues, including:

- a review of the recent past: the changes and trends of the last 10-20 years;
- looking to the future: the principal challenges and opportunities of the next 10-20 years;

I will try this morning to give you some of my thoughts on these issues. I shall be interested to see the recommendations which this conference eventually produces.

Current government policies

This is in fact the second time in three months that I have set out Government policy on race relations, and the position of ethnic minorities in British society. On 4 July I spoke at a major event organised by the CRE and gave a summary of the Government's response to the Commission for Racial Equality's Second Review of the Race Relations Act 1976. I set out some of the practical changes and improvements that the Government will be making to develop our work, and the ability of the CRE, to tackle racism, discrimination and racial violence. What I want to do this morning is to set that in a broader context of how race relations have developed and the direction in which I think we shall move.

I have already stressed on many occasions this Government's firm commitment to the elimination of all forms of discrimination and to the promotion of equality of opportunity. We already have the most comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation in Europe and, in the Commission for Racial Equality, an organisation specifically tasked with the promotion of good race relations, and the enforcement of legal measures. As I mentioned on 4 July, the balance between these two approaches is at the heart of a successful race relations policy, and I am particularly pleased that the Government and the CRE are increasingly able to work together, despite our proper differences, to take this policy forward.

Government has an important role to play in promoting good race relations. And I believe that we should lead by example. That is why I have undertaken to encourage all of my colleagues to put race relations polices high on their agenda. This may involve training, guidance, complaints systems – whatever is appropriate to enable Ministers to be confident that services are delivered fairly and without improper discrimination. Officials are at work now on reviewing the position across all Whitehall departments.

Successive governments have developed strong policies and vigorous legislation to deal with discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity. You certainly won't find anything stronger in any comparable European country. But I believe we now need to concentrate our efforts particularly on the promotion of good race relations. This should be our joint task for the coming years, and will be a recurrent theme in my address this morning.

Aims of government policy

As far as my eventual aim is concerned, I think it remains the same as that which I set out to a group of young people from ethnic minorities at a reception at the Home Office in May: I look forward to the day when this sort of conference, and that sort of reception, will be thought to be wholly unnecessary. It is my aim that we achieve a society which is comfortable with its differences: a society which sees nothing particular to comment about in the ethnic background of any of its members, because people of all races are to be found in all walks of like doing as well as their individual talents and efforts merit. I want to see a society where Britain benefits from the best of all the individual elements which our communities provide. And I want to work with others to tackle the problems and issues which might prevent any members of our society from achieving their potential.

Legislation: racial violence

Central to our policies is the protection which legislation provides. This covers many different areas. Britain's ethnic minorities are, of course, protected by the same general legislation which is there for all of our citizens. But there has been much debate over recent months about specific legislation to tackle racial violence and harassment: its scope, its nature and the laws and commitment needed to tackle it. This debate has been healthy. We all learn from each other's views, and I hope that all sides can at least understand, if not necessarily agree with, the views of others.

I have discussed this issue personally with a number of groups and individuals and we have, of course, had substantial debate in the context of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Bill, where we have tabled two amendments to improve the law in this area. The fundamental fact is that all acts of violence are already criminal offences. The key, over coming years, is to ensure that all of those who commit such offences can be successfully charged, prosecuted and punished in a way which reflects the seriousness of racial attacks. Courts can and do take racial motivation into account as an aggravating factor when passing sentence. I believe that the criminal law and the powers of the courts are sufficient to enable that to happen. I now want to put our effort into making sure that it does happen. That involves all the agencies concerned ensuring that their arrangements are as effective as possible. I have asked the Home Office Racial Attacks Group, which brings together all the key parties, including the CRE, to take this forward.

The Government's role will be to continue to review these arrangements, to ensure that across the country the law is used to its full effect in dealing with these appalling crimes. The Government's position on this is unequivocal. I am committed to ensuring that all those who commit acts of racial violence and harassment are properly punished in the same way that we believe *all* perpetrators of *all* crime should be punished. Our commitment is also to supporting victims and putting people in a position where they are encouraged to report crime and feel confident in doing so.

Legislation - discrimination

Ethnic minorities are also protected by specific legislation in the Race Relations Act 1976 and Part III of the Public Order Act 1986. Both of these have been the subject of scrutiny and review over recent months. I gave my detailed response to the CRE's Second Review of the Race Relations Act on 4 July when I indicated that we were very much in support of giving the CRE effective and sensible powers to tackle issues of discrimination. I stressed my wish for a greater emphasis on cooperation and dialogue - hence my support for the introduction of a power to allow the CRE to accept a legally binding undertaking as an effective and positive way of remedying a problem. My officials are already looking, with the CRE, at implementing the measures which I announced - as speedily as possible.

There are a few issues which the CRE raised which I did not feel able to accept, and there are some areas, particularly the perceived problems of religious discrimination, on which I do not feel that we have enough information to determine what action is necessary. That does not mean that the door is closed. We will continue to look at the issues and investigate the problems over the coming years in close consultation with those concerned.

Promotion of good relations

But in looking at the action we take, there is a very careful balance to be struck. Take the example of discrimination cases brought before Industrial Tribunals. Press reporting of the outcomes is as relevant as the judgement itself to the effect of the case on race relations at large. Even where the Tribunal finds in favour of the applicant, if the complaint is trivialised in the reporting then both the case and the Tribunal process run the risk of being dismissed in the public mind as an oppressive exercise run by the humourless and politically correct. That is a risk which we cannot take, because it dismisses the reality of discrimination as a serious issue.

None of us can control the way in which papers may choose to report cases, but we can control the choice of cases we support. I know that the CRE tries to put its energies and financial support behind cases which will help define the scope of the law and which have implications for others apart from the complainant. That must be the right approach. It is vital that serious messages are not undermined by publicity for cases which, however mischievously, can be portrayed as trivial and over-sensitive. It is not always an easy judgement to make before a case reaches a Tribunal but it is of enormous importance: if the newspaper reading public laughs at the judgement in one case, you can be sure that they are also being invited to laugh at the idea that real discrimination occurs anywhere.

But I also hope that legal sanctions will increasingly be seen as a last resort — what you turn to when encouragement, education and persuasion fail to produce the changes needed. Of course, legal sanctions are important and we need to ensure that they are adequate and available for use where really needed. But I hope that by encouragement, individuals and employers, service providers and public bodies will increasingly see that good race relations is not some sort of extra, an additional burden, but rather something at the centre of any business or society which believes in fairness and giving everyone the chance to fulfil their potential. The promotion of good race relations and equal opportunities is right because it is the most effective way of ensuring that all of our citizens have the same opportunities, and can achieve and contribute all that they can to the fulfilment of their own potential and the wider aspirations of our society.

Commission for Racial Equality

The CRE will play a vital role in this work. I am particularly pleased at the sensible, practical and constructive way in which the CRE and central government are now working together. This does not mean that we have no differences, nor would I want it to. Or that the CRE does not have its own objectives. There have been, and will continue to be, many things about which we cannot agree. But we can achieve a great deal by working together where there is a common view of the end which is sought and we will continue to do so. In November I shall be joining Herman Ouseley for a meeting with the CRE Commissioners. I shall be listening very carefully to their views and will reflect on them. That is something I look forward to as part of the sensible dialogue between us.

Europe

Finally, I would like to deal with the important European dimension of our work on racism. There is in this room an enormous amount of experience in the difficulties and the achievements of minority communities, gained over a long period. There is also a valuable working knowledge of what does and does not actually make a difference on the ground. That practical experience and understanding of the impact of different local approaches is something which we in Britain

are particularly well placed to share with our European colleagues. Not because we are better, but because our experience of trying to address these problems effectively goes back very much further than that of most other European nations.

And working with colleagues in sharing experiences is something we are committed to. It does not make the headlines. There is no thrilling rhetoric to capture the media's attention for a sound-bite or two. But practical work among those who have the day-to-day responsibilities rarely does. So let me give you a flavour of what goes on.

In the Council of Europe, British experience plays a key role in the committee which deals with integration. One of my officials was recently elected vice-chairman, while a former CRE officer chairs a specialist group dealing with practical measures in the same field. At conferences for practitioners we have shared our experience of developing specialist police training on race; we have discussed the benefits and difficulties we have found in a multi-agency approach to racial harassment; and next month we shall be taking to Strasburg what we have learned from the new judicial training programme on race matters, organised by the Judicial Studies Board with close Home Office involvement.

The Council's Vienna Summit last October set up a new European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, the ECRI. Our representative, from the Home Office Research and Planning Unit, chaired its first meeting and is now responsible for its work on non-legal measures.

All this work has been going on for some time. But the treaties governing the European Community do not specifically cover racial equality, and the Government does not accept that the Community has a legal competence in this area.

Very useful work is going on. It takes place less formally through the arrangements for co-operation in justice and home affairs matters. We are involved, as you would expect, and we are also participating in the eminent persons group on racism set up as a result of the Franco-German initiative at the last European Summit. The UK is represented by Baroness Flather. I cannot help commenting on the fact that at the first meeting a few days ago the only black or Asian faces among the eminent people nominated by the member states were Shreela Flather and Kamlesh Bahl, who was representing the European Commission.

With all this activity there is obviously a keenness to make real progress. But there is also a real danger of duplication, of re-inventing solutions, and of tying up in committees people whose time could be spent implementing change and improvements locally.

More worryingly, there is a danger of looking for something which does not exist. There is no single European "minorities problem" and there is no single European solution. Quite apart from the differences in history, customs and expectations, the immigration patterns of different European countries have fundamental differences. It is simply not helpful to compare black British citizens, born and bred here, with South East Asian refugees in Scandinavia, or Turkish guest-workers in Germany who find they have few rights even after three generations. Nor is it helpful to compare any of those groups with historical European minorities where the people have stayed in one place for generations while political borders have shifted around them, making them citizens first of one country then of another.

Our job, I am convinced, is to develop our own systems as effectively as we can and to share that experience with others. Where the problems are similar, we can each learn from, or adapt, what others have tried. But let us not pretend that we can devise some piece of political magic which will allow us all to solve our problems simultaneously. When the legislators and administrators have done their best, when the ink is dry on the signatures, you *still* have the problem of how you make it work on the ground. And that is where it matters.

Conclusion

What I have tried to show today is that the Government fully recognises that British society is made up of many different ethnic groups, and that it will remain so in the future. We look at the effectiveness of our policies and are ready to adapt them in the face of the changing needs of both ethnic minorities and society as a whole. As I said earlier, there are no simple solutions or easy remedies. It is simplistic to talk of the needs of "ethnic minorities". What is increasingly clear is that the patterns of success and failure within various parts of the minority communities show wide variations.

Britain is already a multi-racial society and, largely, a successful one. Our aim, both as individuals and as a society, must be to ensure that the values of the different cultures which make up the UK are protected and respected. The future of Britain as a multi-racial society should be one where we all value each other's contributions as individuals, where considerations of race or colour are superfluous. That must be the basis of any society which claims to be fair and civilised. That is the society I want to see throughout Britain.

Goals and Gains

Herman Ouseley

Herman Ouseley has been chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality since 1993. Previously he was chief executive for the London Borough of Lambeth and chief executive of the Inner London Education Authority.

Heritage and fabric

Predicting the future of multi-ethnic Britain requires insight, vision and understanding, and perhaps a little guesswork. But the very first thing to do is to be absolutely clear about the nature of the beast. The label 'multi-ethnic Britain' still, to many people, signifies just its minority ethnic communities. This is, of course, wrong. Multi-ethnic Britain means all of Britain and all of its people. Britain is multi-ethnic, just as it is a parliamentary democracy.

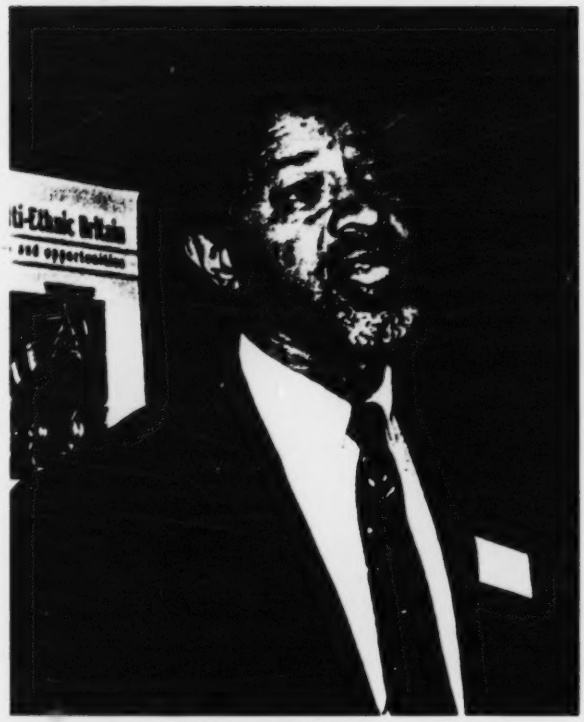
All citizens recognise and most accept the role of Parliament in the heritage and fabric of our society, even if they don't know who their MP is. My objective for the future — and I don't mean the too-distant future either — is that all citizens should equally recognise and accept multi-ethnic Britain as a positive feature of the heritage and fabric of their society, whether they are black, white or Asian, old or young, and whether they live in a multi-ethnic area or not.

We are witnessing major shifts in the economy and in job opportunities. The patterns of paid work are changing, with an increase in part-time work, more women in work and more men out of work. Public expenditure is minutely scrutinised and public service values themselves are challenged as funding sources diversify. We are witnessing rising crime rates, increased violence and increasing numbers of communities characterised by mass dependence on a shrinking welfare state. Poverty affects increasing numbers of families. Industrial and other pollution threatens our health and the environment. Worldwide, we face unprecedented demographic upheavals as tyranny or famine drive huge swathes of refugee populations to seek a life elsewhere.

The pace and intensity of all this change means that we have to get our bottom-line principles right for the future. Valuing a multi-ethnic society as a national asset which will assist Britain play a positive and constructive role on the European and world stage is one of those principles. And, if that is one of our starting points, it makes it easier to develop social and economic policies which are essentially people-friendly, people-focused. Being alive to the diversity in society makes it easier to imagine the variety of ways in which policies may impact in practice on different peoples' lives.

Urban policy

Social and urban polices of the last two decades have failed to match up to local people's expectations. The quality of life has eroded, income levels have dropped, communities have disintegrated, the environment has become more depressing and equal opportunities remain out of their reach. All the special and specific programmes have missed their targets.



They have failed to involve and benefit local people and have failed to enhance social cohesion. The Audit Commission's study *Urban Regeneration and Economic Development* was critical of the proliferation of urban initiatives, observing "Government support programmes are seen as a patchwork quilt of complexity and idiosyncrasy".

The Single Regeneration Budget deals with some of the structural defects but ignores the "people effect" and the "feel good" factor for local communities, since there are no new resources and especially since special needs programmes, such as those being funded through Section 11, will be slashed. Urban policies and programmes have failed to recognise and utilise the strengths of our diversity.

The reality of multi-ethnic Britain is that we don't yet have a society in which diversity brings mutual respect and inspires social and economic cohesion. Too many people feel threatened by, not comfortable with, the social diversity around them. Conflict, division, resentment and even hatred are the features of our multi-ethnic Britain which seem most often to be its visible characteristics. There is a "them and us" outlook and people live in different worlds even in the same streets.

In Brick Lane just off the Commercial Road in London, for example, you can have a good meal for £5 and a few hundred yards away you can quaff a cocktail in a wine-bar for the same price. Apart from the price, and what you get for your money, they are different worlds.

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Around Brick Lane, Bangladeshis are the predominant community and they live in one of the poorest and most deprived areas of the UK. Close to the Brick Lane area is the City of London. Office buildings jostle with each other for space and prestige. You see few black faces there. Of course there are those at the service end and in lower grades but there are virtually no Bangladeshis, especially in the UK owned businesses. Black faces do not generally appear in British boardrooms except occasionally to serve the food or clean up the mess.

Another landmark in London which symbolises the failure to adopt people-friendly policies, and therefore fails ethnic minorities too, is the Docklands development, once to be the flagship of a new entrepreneurial vision for the UK. Largely affected by the prolonged recession it is now mainly dormant, a city of the future that is symbolic of failed urban regeneration policies. Failed not because of its creativity, vision and investment successes, but because it failed local people. The poor whites resented it because the rich whites benefited. The focus for this anger locally, however, has been the Bangladeshi community. Racist attacks are everyday incidents and support for the far-right has been in the ascendency, even though electorally, I am delighted to say, the BNP seems to have had its day, if the recent Shadwell by-election is any indication.

"...in tackling racial inequalities ... we challenge ... inefficiency and incompetence and pave the way to managing diversity."

The politics of race and ethnic relations are bound into the process of economic, social and technological change. A few years ago, the so-called 'trickle-down' approach was thought by the Government and others to be the best bet for improving the lot of black and other ethnic minorities. No race-specific programmes, just the natural benefit flowing from a strong economy. It has not worked. The relationship between race relations on the one hand, and general social and economic development on the other, is more complex and dynamic than that. Britain cannot afford to ignore the powerful catalyst effect of dealing properly with racial inequalities, not as a fringe activity, an afterthought or a long-awaited trickling down, but as part of our mainstream policy objectives. For in tackling racial inequalities, involving as it does the need to detect and act upon the underlying issues to influence positive outcomes, we challenge not only inequalities, but also inefficiency and incompetence and pave the way to managing diversity.

Put simply, minority ethnic communities' successful involvement at all levels in British society is bound up with the challenge and eradication of racism; and the future of multi-ethnic Britain is bound up with the successful management of diversity. Unfortunately, however, the struggle to mainstream anti-racism has met with ever more determined efforts to sanitise and marginalise it. A kamikaze reaction, if ever there was one.

Black leadership

Sometimes we black people do not do ourselves credit either. Black political leadership was a dominant force for challenging racism in the 1960s, 70s and up to the mid 1980s. Since then it has done a Lord Lucan: it's on the missing list. There is often no vision, except to become rich and chic millionaires, or to be high profile, or to enter party politics. There are factions, cabals and organised take-overs, often along race, colour and religious lines. Activists fight each other for control of anti-racist organisations.

In the 1980s we had active and powerful local black politicians. They were even sometimes leaders of their local council. Now we still see black councillors with the chains and the limos, but it's more a case of exotica and floss (or is it a gloss?) for there is little power or influence.

Racism and the media

Alongside that vacuum, racial discrimination remains at sadly persistently high levels. Complaints of racial discrimination coming to the Commission for Racial Equality have more than doubled in the last 10 years. The increase has accelerated during 1994 unrelentingly.

And sections of the mass media continue to treat us as if we were satanic. Asylum seekers and immigrants are portrayed as black, foreign, undesirable, scroungers, trouble. They are seen as overwhelming, overbearing and over here. They are blamed for problems, often before they even arrive.

Recently, a white young man was tragically killed in an apparently racially motivated attack. It made the front page of virtually every national newspaper in Britain. It then made some of the front pages a second time, when the Princess of Wales visited the area and the bereaved family. Contrast the media coverage with that of racially motivated killings of black people. No front page story. No royal visits.

Any act of violence is reprehensible and unacceptable. The loss of life is a tragedy too far, whether or not the killing had racial motives. But should the media coverage be so lopsided? Is that fair? Is it just?

Alongside the horror and terror of racial violence — and the fear of it — sit a string of other ways in which black and ethnic minorities continue to face disadvantage and discrimination. I will not repeat the details with which most of this audience will be familiar, but the headlines of unemployment, housing, education, criminal justice and health services will remind you of the all-pervasive scope of racial inequality, which must be dismantled if Britain — all of Britain — is to have a future to be proud of.

Gains

But instead of treating you to a catalogue of the evils we need to get rid of, I'd rather spell out some examples of the progress being made in spite of the evils. We don't acknowledge or celebrate success nearly enough. We need to draw inspiration and energy from wherever we can get it. For example, from the gains and achievements listed in the box printed opposite.

Gains and achievements – a stocktake

This list was provided by Herman Ouseley as part of his speech.

- More organisations and institutions now commonly accept the reality of discrimination and are aware that they must take action against it even if the description "equal opportunity employer" is often an over-optimistic label.
- Many black and ethnic minority people are more confident, focused, organised, determined to make their mark - assert their rights - to achieve what they want.
- Ten years ago there were no black or Asian MPs, but now there are six.
- There are now four black or Asian Peers where once there were none.
- In London there are now 202 black and Asian councillors, approximately 10.5 per cent of the total, compared with 120 ten years ago (about six per cent).
- In local government important strides have been made on issues of equality in service delivery and employment. In many ways local councils are the trail-blazers and some workforces do now reflect the ethnic composition of their local population even though not as well spread in status and position as they might be.
- We have a black general secretary of a major trade union, Bill Morris at the TGWU, and a black president, Doreen Cameron of NATFHE. Ten years ago there were no black people in such high office. The election of Bill Morris was an important milestone in that a predominantly white membership voted for a black person to such an important job. The TUC has also just elected 3 more black people to the General Council, including Bob Purkiss, who doubles as one of our commissioners at the CRE.
- In the media there are a few black and ethnic minority people represented in the TV and radio board rooms. At senior executive level there are Samir Shah at the BBC, Farrukh Dhondy at Channel 4 and Trevor Phillips at LWT in TV.
- Black and ethnic minority people, compared to 10 years ago, are increasingly involved in the growing commercial world of radio - and in advertising. Although there is still too much stereotyping and not enough diverse portrayal, there are more positive images and representation of black and ethnic minority people. There are more actors getting work now compared to 10 years ago, and a programme like *'The Real McCoy'* shows the progress made.
- In the Metropolitan Police in 1992 there were four black or Asian Chief Inspectors, that's less than one per cent, and nine black or Asian Inspectors, that's just over half of one percent. Overall only two per cent of the workforce were from black and ethnic minorities and that is not good enough. But the police service do now recognise that there is a problem and they are working to try and improve black representation in the force and tackling the internal culture that has been so oppressive.
- The Legal Profession has been traditionally a bastion of the elite, and a white male elite at that - but things are changing. Nearly eight per cent of practising barristers are now black or Asian. There are now 10 QCs who are Asian or black compared to hardly any 10 years ago. We know of two circuit judges who are Asian and three tribunal chairs who are black or Asian, compared to none in the past.

  However, there is a down-side. Seventy-five per cent of all black and Asian barristers are to be found in 19 predominantly black and minority sets of chambers. Only seven per cent of black students have been offered training contracts, compared with 47 per cent of their white peers. Black and Asian solicitors represent only two per cent of the whole profession.
- In the world of sport we are aware of black and ethnic minority achievement in many areas — although we have to be careful that black youngsters are not stereotyped and steered by teachers towards sport because "that's what they are good at", to the detriment of other subject areas.
- Today around a quarter of professional players in the English Professional Footballers Association are black, compared with less than five per cent in 1978. Recently Paul Ince became the first black player to captain England. Even Everton has now signed a black player!
- There are also increasing numbers of black coaches in the game. Viv Anderson, for example, managed first division Barnsley last season.

  We would expect to see increasing numbers of black people entering the administration and management of the game in the coming years. At present are hardly any.
- In housing, in recent years we have seen the establishment of a vibrant black run housing association sector. Fifteen years ago there were very few black-run housing associations. Now there are 61 registered associations with current budget levels or around £91 million per year. That is big business in any language.

  These associations are not about separate development, they are concerned with black and ethnic minority people organising themselves to provide housing for those in need or for those whose needs are not being met elsewhere. What we are seeing is black achievement, black success in a tangible form, and the cross-over of increasing numbers of black and ethnic minority people to mainstream housing.

So we can celebrate success and achievements, we can acknowledge progress and success towards equality. We can point to relative deprivation and persistent racial discrimination. And we can recognise that we are a long way from the CRE's vision of a "Just society in which everyone has an equal chance to learn, live and work free from racial discrimination and prejudice and free from the fear of racial harassment and violence." But whilst we are proud of successes and achievements they have not moved our communities as a whole significantly towards equal and fair shares of the available opportunities. Individual successes are held up as symbols of equality achievements. Yet, many people see the quality of their lives eroding because of poverty, unemployment, crime, discrimination and racial violence. How do we therefore create a just and fair society?

How are we to get there?

This all comes full circle to people-driven social policies. Policies and investment to generate wealth, regenerate and revitalise the urban areas and to turn the tide against increasing tension, conflict, resentment and violence must involve people. Local people, all people.

The situation cannot simply be turned around overnight. But it cannot be allowed to drift along in the way it has for a couple of decades, relying on a combination of failed experiments and short-term funding for "special" projects.

People-driven policies require action through formal mainstream education; work with young children and their parents in developing the values of a caring society; new skills in communicating across communities, cultures and generation; and an understanding of the responsibilities which go with civil rights, equality entitlements and citizenship.

The "feel good" factor, missing in so many communities, comes from valuing people as people, as members of one race, the human race, in which we recognise differences and diversity and the pain caused by oppressive and unfair treatment.

This does not, of course, in any way invalidate the necessary work a body such as the CRE has to do in law enforcement terms as part of the strategy for eliminating discrimination:

- We will go on helping individuals who are the victims of discrimination to get justice.
- We will use our powers of Formal Investigation to uncover racial discrimination and prescribe remedies.
- We will support the many campaigns for tougher laws to rid our society of racial hatred and racially motivated violence.
- We will go on arguing for strengthening of anti-discrimination legislation.

But alongside this essential work we also recognise that long lasting, meaningful changes are best effected if those involved believe in their purpose and feel good about it.

"The "feel good" factor, missing in so many communities, comes from valuing people as people, as members of one race, the human race, in which we recognise differences and diversity and the pain caused by oppressive and unfair treatment."

Collaboration

Our "UNITING BRITAIN FOR A JUST SOCIETY" campaign is a broad based high profile campaign to raise awareness about the divisive and damaging effects of racism and discrimination. It seeks to get public agencies and the corporate sector to face up to their social responsibilities to help eradicate racial discrimination. Not because the CRE says they should or even just because it is unlawful, but because they want to. Because they see it as bad for their diverse markets, customers, communities and the environment in which business needs to flourish. And because they feel good about contributing through direct action to a just and fair society for everyone.

In collaborating and co-operating with other relevant agencies, the CRE is therefore developing racial equality charter standards through which we seek self-motivated action from institutions in building racial equality standards into their performance standards on excellence, quality and efficiency. Organisational responses to charter standards will come from bodies including private sector employers, government departments, local authorities, other public agencies and service providers particularly the youth service, the criminal justice system, the media, financial Institutions and voluntary organisations.

"... we must all take part in going for it, because we can be sure that all of us – the whole of multi-ethnic Britain – will either suffer together if we don't or benefit together if we pull it off. Let's go for it."

The goal in a nutshell

The goal is a simple one for multi-ethnic Britain: *"a just society in which everyone has an equal chance to learn, live and work free from prejudice and discrimination and free from the fear of racial harassment and violence."*

Achieving this goal may be difficult but we must all take part in going for it, because we can be sure that all of us – the whole of multi-ethnic Britain – will either suffer together if we don't or benefit together if we pull it off. Let's go for it.

Ethnicity and complexity

Tariq Modood

Tariq Modood is a senior fellow at the Policy Studies Institute. He is the author of "Not Easy Being British", published by the Runnymede Trust, and co-author of "Changing Ethnic Identities", published in December 1994 by the Policy Studies Institute.

I shall point to four developments which I think make the context of ethnic identity in the 1990s very different from that presupposed by the idea of "political blackness" and other ideas of anti-racism in the 1980s. I shall go on to mention briefly the principal findings of some recent research, and conclude with a statement of principle which I hope will be the basis of new policies.

Decline of the Atlantocentric perspective

The Atlantocentric model conceptualised black-white relationships in the Atlantic rim as the paradigm of all "race" relations. The historical core of this model was the slave trade triangle. The modern political core consists of the US civil rights movement, anti-apartheid and the urban and equal opportunities programmes which arose in Britain in response to riots and the prospect of social breakdown in the inner cities. Thus the Atlantic triangle could be said to have widened from Liverpool-West Africa-Virginia to London-Soweto-Los Angeles. It represents, of course, a valuable political force with much to its credit. Yet the conceptualisation of British race relations in Atlantocentric terms, even if plausible once, is currently faced with three problems.

The first of these is the non-Atlantic character of the majority of non-white Britons. According to the 1991 census two of the three million people in Britain of non-European origins have origins from outside the Atlantic triangle, above all from the Indian sub-continent. They bring with them distinctive cultures, solidarities, communal authority, aspirations, enmities and memories, and a colonial relationship of subordination which is quite different from the Atlantic pattern.

The second problem flows from the first. Events outside the Atlantic world, and of its intellectual and political frame, are now impinging on domestic British race relations more than do events in other parts of the Atlantic area. Khalistan, Kashmir, and Khomeni; the Gulf War, the destruction of the mosque at Ayodha and the fate of multiculturalism in Bosnia — these have a greater influence on British race relations than the fortunes of the ANC or Jesse Jackson, or the riots of Los Angeles. In March 1989 the chairman of the influential US congressional black caucus brought a large delegation to London to support the launch of a parallel organisation at Westminster; it has sunk without a trace. But the Ayatollah Khomeni without leaving Tehran was able to inspire and possibly fund the creation of a Muslim Parliament in London, launched in January 1992, which has repeatedly been able to capture the media headlines and which, for better or for ill, has coloured majority-minority relations in the UK ever since.

The third reason for the declining relevance of the Atlantocentric model is Britain's increasing integration into European political structures. If the principal Atlantic racial line is that of black-white, then in Europe the fault-line is Europa-Islam. This is of equal if not of more importance in understanding contemporary prejudice and racism. I think it is already the case in Britain now, as it has been in Europe for some time, that the extra-European origin group which suffers the worst prejudice and exclusion is working-class Muslims. Since about two thirds of all non-white people in the EU are Muslims, Islamophobia and the integration of Muslims are rightly emerging as key race relations issues.

Ethnicity in public

Minority ethnicity, albeit white ethnicity, has traditionally been regarded in Britain as acceptable if it was confined to the privacy of family and community, and did not make any political demands. Earlier groups of migrants and refugees, such as the Irish or the Jews in the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century, found that peace and prosperity came easier the less public one made one's minority practices or identity. Perhaps for non-European origin groups, whose physical appearance gave them a visibility which made them permanently vulnerable to racial discrimination, the model of a privatised group identity was never viable. Yet, additionally, one has to acknowledge the existence of a climate of opinion quite different from that experienced by the earlier Irish or Jewish incomers.

In association with other socio-political movements such as feminism and gay rights which challenge the public-private distinction or demand a share of public space, ethnic difference is increasingly seen as something that needs not just toleration but also public acknowledgement, resources and representation. While political activism may have declined in some respects, for example in trade unions, there has been a burst of activism and discourse around minority issues, and a demand for respect for minority groups.

This assertiveness, based on feelings of not being respected or of lacking access to public space, often consists of counterposing positive images against traditional or dominant stereotypes, of projecting identities in order to challenge existing power relations or to negotiate the sharing of physical, institutional and discursive space. While there is not a comprehensive political consensus about the desirability of these public ethnicities, there is a vague multiculturalism as a policy ideology, which has perhaps contributed to the ethnic assertiveness. Certainly many of the race relations conflicts today (eg the Honeyford affair, the Rushdie affair, arguments about golliwogs, the Black and White Minstrels) arise out of a demand for public space, for public respect and public resources for minority cultures, and for the transmission of such cultures to the young.

Cultural racism

While British racism has always included hostility directed at what are identified as inferior or primitive cultures, and while people from certain backgrounds have always been stereotyped in terms of alleged cultural traits, the cultural dimension has in recent years become more explicit. In any case, the presence of non-European origin cultural practices, the political claims made on their behalf and, by implication if not explicitly, the challenging of white British norms and symbols are giving rise to a counter-assertion in the form of new layers of racism and hostility. This cultural racism is targeted not just at non-whites as such but at certain groups, those perceived to be assertively different and not trying to fit in. Such racism uses cultural difference to vilify, marginalise or demand cultural assimilation from groups who also suffer colour-racism. Racial groups which have distinctive cultural identities or community life will suffer this additional dimension of discrimination and prejudice.

An obverse phenomenon is the growth of black-white sociability and cultural synthesis, especially amongst young people. For example amongst some white working-class groups black cultural styles are held in high prestige and friendships with young black men and women regarded as acceptable, and black-white marriage and cohabitation have become quite common. Many young white people, especially boys, admire and hero-worship successful Black stars in football and other sports, and in music and entertainment.

Competition between identities

There have been attempts to form a single "black" constituency out of the extra-European origin settlers and their British-born descendants. Such attempts have sometimes seemed promising. But they have yet to succeed and it is not obvious that they will ever do so. Rather, the last few years have seen the emergence at a public level of a plurality of identities, of competition between identities, and of the use of identity in the formation of pressure groups, coalitions and political solidarities to win public resources and representation, and to influence policy-makers.

While some groups assert a racial identity based on the experience of having suffered racism, others choose to emphasise their family origins and homeland or form around a caste or a religious sect, as do Hindus such as the Patels or Lohanas, while yet others promote a trans-ethnic identity like Islam. However, the competition between identities is not simply a competition between groups: it is also within communities and within individuals. It is quite possible, for example, for someone to be torn between the claims of being "black", Asian, Pakistani and Muslim, and also having to choose between them and the solidarities they represent or having to rank them, synthesise them or distribute them between different areas of one's life — and then possibly having to reconcile them with the claims of gender, class and Britishness.

Some research findings

Researchers at the Policy Studies Institute conducted in-depth interviews amongst 74 South Asian and Caribbean people about what their ethnic background meant to them. We found that most young people said that their ethnic heritage was of importance to them, even though the majority thought they were largely culturally British. Their ethnic identity sometimes consisted more of a symbolic assertion than of distinctive cultural practices. The need for a symbolic assertion of "difference" arises from a perception of racist exclusion; the form that it takes depends upon the person's sense of belonging and what gives people individual and collective self-confidence.

We found that the three most prevalent identities were a pan-Caribbean black identity; national and regional South Asian identities (for example Pakistani or Gujarati); and non-Christian religious identities, primarily Muslim. Over half the relevant young people accepted the term "Asian", but on the whole they saw it as of secondary importance. Only a small number of Asians identified with an inclusive "black" identity, but for those who did this was important, often overriding all others. The research appears in *Changing Ethnic Identities*, published by the Policy Studies Institute.

Statement of principle

We need to rethink the dominant conceptions of Britishness, so that minorities can make a claim upon it, regardless of colour and origins, and without having to conform to a narrow cultural norm — or, indeed, to a narrow anti-racist norm. We must accept what is important to people, and must be even-handed between the different identity formations. The error of the 1980s was to encourage colour-identities and discourage religious and other identities. Surely no one can still doubt the resentments and divisiveness which that created.

A new public philosophy of racial equality and pluralism must aspire to bring into harmony the pluralism which exists on the ground, not to pit it against itself by insisting that some modes of collectivity trump all others.

Changing Ethnic Identities

Changing Ethnic Identities by Tariq Modood, Sharon Beishon and Satnam Virdee was published by the Policy Studies Institute in December 1994. It is based on 74 in-depth interviews. There are chapters on family and social contacts, community languages, religion, marriage, and difference, commonality and exclusion. A summary leaflet is available free of charge from the Policy Studies Institute, 100 Park Village East, London NW1 3SR. The full report costs £15 from BEBC Distribution Ltd, PO Box 1496, Poole, Dorset BH12 3YD.

Tariq Modood's book of essays and articles *Not Easy Being British* contains discussions of identity, discourse, the Rushdie Affair, citizenship, antiracism and the Indian economic success. It costs £7. 95 post free from the Runnymede Trust, 11 Princelet Street, London E1 6QH.

Racial Equality: colour, culture and justice, written by Taroq Modood for the Commission on Social Justice, is a succinct summary of key issues available from the Institute for Public Policy Research, 30—32 Southampton Street, London WC2E 7RA, price £2. 95.

Concerns in the inner city

Pola Manzila Uddin

Councillor Mrs Pola Manzila Uddin is deputy leader of Tower Hamlets Borough Council, East London. Previously she worked as a social worker in the London Borough of Newham.

Introduction

While Government programmes have come and gone, the underlying problems of most inner cities — mass unemployment, poverty, a mismatch between local skills and new jobs, a declining infrastructure and a low quality of life for many people — have remained, and indeed have intensified over the last two decades.

In my own Borough, Tower Hamlets, a number of social problems previously considered to be under control or eliminated have returned with a vengeance. For example, overt racism is an everyday occurrence and overcrowding is worse than it has been for decades.

It is clear that something has gone badly wrong with public policy. In this paper, I want briefly to consider what has happened and to suggest a number of steps which might be taken to reverse the trend.

My perspective is principally that of a local authority Member. I believe that local authorities can, and should, play a major part in community leadership. However, local authorities alone cannot solve the problems of our cities. There is a need for a concerted approach involving all the major institutions, both locally and at national level.

The Political Economy of Unaccountability

I believe that three inter-related trends largely explain the continuing decline or the inner cities throughout the 1980s and 1990s:

- The failure of public expenditure to keep pace with social need, in the face of mass unemployment and demographic change.
- The fragmentation of many public bureacracies.
- The reduction of local accountability.

As is well known, the Conservative Government of the 1980s set its face against strategic planning by elected public bodies. The Greater London Council and the Metropolitan Councils were abolished and their functions dispersed among a plethora of quangos and joint arrangements scarcely comprehensible to professional politicians and public administrators, let alone the general public.

Urban Development Corporations, Training and Enterprise Councils and Task Forces accountable to Whitehall supplemented local authorities in many city areas, and the competitive language of the market replaced the previous orthodoxies of planning and public service.

Tower Hamlets provides a stark case study of what can happen when the needs of local people are subordinated to market forces. Today, we have about 3.8 million square feet of unused office space in Docklands, much of it speculatively built with the support of the LDDC. At the same time, domestic overcrowding is the worst in London and unemployment is the second highest in the capital. The great majority of the jobs in Docklands have been of little or no benefit to the people of the Borough. Had local people been given a say in the redevelopment of the Docks, I am sure the story would have been very different.

"... mass unemployment, poverty, a mismatch between local skills and new jobs, a declining infrastructure and a low quality of life for many people — have remained, and indeed have intensified over the last two decades."

New Steps Towards Integration

It seem possible that the market-led approach of the last two decades may have run its course, and that an integrated approach to the delivery of public services may be coming back into vogue.

There are a number of reasons for this. First, as I have sketched out briefly in the preceding section, the free market experiment has all too evidently failed the inner cities. Large scale funding from Europe has also led to a more co-ordinated approach, with local authorities increasingly working together on joint submissions.

The Government, too, has taken steps to bring to an end the ridiculous fragmentation of the various schemes targeted at the inner cities, with the new Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) replacing over twenty existing schemes. However, there is a risk that minority interests could lose out, with the loss of targeted schemes such as Section 11 funding and the Ethnic Minority Business Initiative.

Even the 'free market' enthusiasts of the Thatcher years seem to be getting in on the act. In the last few months, Thatcherite 'think tanks' have begun to advocate a community-based approach, not dissimilar to that practised by the Left in local government.

Local authorities, despised and disparaged by the Right for so many years, seem to be back in fashion. Proposals for councils to be given commissioning responsibility for primary health care have come from both the political Right and Left. Similarly, potentially wide-reaching proposals for local authorities' security forces to be given powers similar to those of the police have received broad based support.

Integration, Planning and Local Accountability

If, as I suspect, integration and strategic planning are the key themes of the future, it is important that we learn from the experience of the post-war period. In particular, we must ensure that we do not repeat the mistakes of the politicians and planners who imposed technocratic, 'top down' solutions on local communities. It is certainly arguable that the main reason why we have had to go through the 'free market' experience of the last twenty years is because post war planning lost touch with the views and aspirations of the general public it was meant to serve.

There is today a strong basis for democratic accountability in local government. In my own Council, we aim to involve local people in all matters affecting their lives. We have over thirty consultative forums, for a population of about 170,000. Service users are consulted about their needs, and it is a Council priority to promote community self reliance and community development. There is also a large and thriving voluntary sector with which the Council has close links.

All Council committee meetings are open to the public, and only a bare minimum of reports are dealt with confidentially. Councillors are more accessible than they have ever been and are far more representative of the local community than any quango operating in the Borough. For example, over a quarter of the Town Hamlets population is of Bangladeshi ethnic origin, and this is reflected in the composition of the Council, which has 14 Asian members out of 50.

Tower Hamlets has undergone a unique experience of politicisation when faced with increasing racism, particularly since the election in 1993 of a BNP candidate at a by-election in the Isle of Dogs. The turnout at the May 1994 local elections rose by eight per cent compared with the previous elections in 1990, and the local press regularly carries correspondence from residents about local political matters. This upsurge in interest in local politics is underpinned by a clear desire for the Council and other public bodies to be fully accountable.

The involvement of the local community, combined with the local knowledge and commitment that elected Members bring to their councils, leads, in my experience, to higher quality decision-making and more durable solutions to the problems of the inner cities than are achievable through other models of administration.

Conclusion

Tower Hamlets is not untypical of many other inner city areas. There is enormous untapped human potential in the inner cities, which needs to be utilised. The political vision and commitment have always existed locally. What we need now is a commitment by central Government to a new approach to inner city regeneration, which is strategic in nature, democratically accountable and — equally important, though only touched upon here for reasons of space — adequately resourced. With these three things in place, we can begin to make real and lasting progress.

REGENERATION

Mike Medas is a project officer working for Sia, the national development agency for black and ethnic minority voluntary organisations. He is the author of From City Challenge to the Single Regeneration Budget, published by Sia. These are extracts from the paper which he contributed to the conference on urban policy:

... Language must be used with care ...People sometimes refer to the day when sterling collapsed in September 1992 as "Black Wednesday". If that date had some positive significance in Black history, we too might call it a "Black Wednesday". However, Black people do not normally commemmorate a negative event by labelling it black.

How, then, must we define this year's urban policy buzz-word, "regeneration"? A dictionary definition is the "regrowth by an animal or plant of an organ, tissue or part that has been lost or destroyed". If Black communities took this literally, the British government might find itself owing them several centuries, rather than several decades, worth of "regeneration".

... Historically, Black voluntary organisations emerged from a tradition of self-help from below, rather than philanthropy from above, unlike many of their white counterparts ... When state funding arrived, it was both reactive and marginal: reactive because it always followed actual or feared uprisings, marginal because it meant acceptance that although Black people paid taxes and rates, they would not benefit from mainstream public spending but would need schemes such as Section 11.

... Current urban policy is dominated by the Single Regeneration Budget. For the Black voluntary sector this has meant too little too late in terms of formal consultation over the bidding guidance, and a framework bereft of safeguards to ensure Black representation in bidding partnerships or monitoring of project bids for race equality outcomes. Sia's work suggests that most Black voluntary groups were not given the opportunity to contribute to bids shortlisted by regional offices, and that local authorities and TECs dominated partnerships, as expected.

... The 1985 Church of England report *Faith in the City* observed that since 1979 the "cake" of mainstream local authority spending had been reduced by more than the "icing" of special urban policy measures had increased. Being disproportionately reliant on local government funding, Black groups were most affected by this. The trend continues into the 1990s, but with both the icing and the cake shrinking. The SRB, for instance, will spend less overall than the programmes which it replaced.

From City Challenge to the Single Regeneration Budget by Mike Medas costs £10 for statutory organisations and £5 for voluntary. It can be obtained from Sia, High Holborn House, 49/51 Bedford Row, London WC1V 6DJ.

Renewing Antiracism

David Gillborn

David Gillborn is a lecturer in sociology of education at the University of London Institute of Education. His publications include "Race", Ethnicity and Education: teaching and learning in multi-ethnic schools *(1990) and* Racism and Antiracism in Real Schools *(1995).*

Introduction

With the increasing tide of racist violence across Europe, and widespread reforms of social policy at home, the need for antiracism is as great as ever. Yet "experts" in many fields (including local government, education and industry) have begun to write off antiracism as outdated and ineffectual. This conclusion is both premature and dangerous. Just as racism changes, so antiracism must develop. Our understandings of race and ethnicity must be more flexible and sophisticated. Rather than dumping antiracism, we should get better at it.

The significance of education

Education is a crucial arena for antiracist debate, and attempts to challenge racism in education have a long (and troubled) ancestry. Historically, schools and local authorities have been able to take advantage of a system which allowed for an unusually high degree of autonomy, freeing educationists to be among the most consistently active professional groups in the struggle against racism. In recent years, however, these activities have come under threat. Education has emerged as a key ideological battleground, an arena where each new Government initiative is assumed to have a natural consequence requiring a further reform of an already shell-shocked system. While current reforms institutionalise an overwhelmingly Eurocentric curriculum, for example, research suggests that the education system already operates in racialised ways which often disadvantage minority pupils. In addition to its symbolic importance as a crucial field of social policy, therefore, the education system is especially significant because it provides a testing ground for many new initiatives and strategies. It highlights not only the damage which can be done but also the progress that is possible.

In the remainder of this paper, using education as a touchstone for wider changes, I want to examine briefly the significance of recent policy developments and to consider problems with previous forms of antiracism. Finally, I shall outline possible future directions for a more critical and workable form of antiracist practice.

The 'new' racism

The classic definition of racism has two components: (a) a belief in the existence of separate, fixed races and (b) a belief in the innate superiority of one or more races over others. In recent years, however, a rather different form of racism has come to prominence in Britain. The 'new' racism (as it is sometimes called) relies on appeals to *culture*, rather than colour, and asserts the importance of *difference*, not superiority. This version of racist sentiment is not, of course, wholly new; but its power as a recurring theme in both political and everyday language is increasingly important. It is a theme which Margaret Thatcher famously captured in her declaration that "people are really rather afraid that this country might be swamped by people with a different culture".

"Talk of 'the nation', 'our heritage' and 'tradition' often operates as a code for race issues ... Those who do not fit the assumed profile are at best seen as an inconvenience, at worst as a threat."

Despite the absence of racial categories, this kind of position remains racist because it operates systematically to disadvantage ethnic minority groups. Talk of 'the nation', 'our heritage' and 'tradition' often operates as a code for race issues: it can translate into policy decisions which treat Britain as if it were a solid, homogeneous block where everyone shares the same religion, the same tongue and the same set of aspirations. Those who do not fit the assumed profile are at best seen as an inconvenience, at worst as a threat.

One consequence of the 'new' racism is that potentially racist policies can be presented in non-racist terms: they appear neutral and fair, even when they threaten negative consequences for minority communities and for racial equality in general. The most recent educational reforms, for example, make no mention of race. But they emphasise "the nation's Christian heritage and traditions" and in this way an apparently inclusive policy — introduced as an aid to "every child in the country" — actually excludes many pupils and their communities. Similarly the publication of crude raw exam results and increased competition between schools are encouraging many schools to consider greater use of selection. Previous research suggests that such a move would be bad news for anyone concerned with equality of opportunity; yet the changes are presented as a move to raise 'standards' in the face of 'mediocrity'. Any talk of 'equality' risks being labelled as a defence of 'uniformity' or sectional interests.

The 'new' racism is a persuasive and subtle force for which conventional antiracism is ill equipped. By foregrounding issues of culture, this language sidesteps 'the race issue', while adopting racist positions.

The failure of symbolic antiracism

Sadly, despite a long history of challenging inequality, education also provides one of the clearest examples of the failure of old-style antiracism. In the late 1980s an inquiry into the circumstances surrounding a racist murder in Burnage High School, Manchester, briefly made headline news. Sections of the press represented the inquiry's findings as an indictment of antiracism in its totality — according to one

paper, the '*Anti-racist policy led to killing*'. In fact the inquiry report argued strongly in favour of antiracism, as an essential component in the work of all schools. The inquiry team were, however, scathing in their criticism of the form of "symbolic, moral and doctrinaire anti-racism" that had been practised at Burnage. Among the defining characteristics of symbolic anti-racism are:

- an essentialist and reductive approach:
  colour is assumed to be the most important feature of a person or community — overriding other issues such as social class, gender, age, size etc.
- an assumption of white racism:
  racism is defined as a 'white only' problem — all whites are implicated in racism and racist structures.
- a black/white worldview:
  blacks are cast as powerless victims and differences within and between minority communities are denied relevance.

This is a position which denies the complexity of life in multi-ethnic Britain. Race and ethnicity are crucial factors, but they interact and cross-cut with other factors (especially questions of class, gender and sexuality), sometimes in unexpected and contradictory ways. Additionally, by defining out white communities, such an approach cannot avoid seeming unfairly to privilege one or more minority groups at the direct expense of whites. By meeting such complaints with a moralistic response, which assumes white guilt as a central plank of its philosophy, this kind of 'symbolic' or 'moral' anti-racism places race in a vacuum which denies the reality of people's experiences. Contrary to its professed goals, this approach encourages polarisation around racial identities which are taken to be fixed and obvious.

Towards a critical antiracism

In this section I want to suggest some broad principles which may prove useful in developing a more *critical* form of antiracism. *Critical* is a good descriptor because such an approach must be :

(a) more sophisticated in its ability to critique changing forms of racism; and
(b) self-critical in its recognition of the limits of success and the likelihood of mistakes.

These points arise from research on anti-racism in schools which have moved beyond a rhetorical commitment to 'symbolic' anti-racism and have begun genuinely to change their practice and expectations in line with antiracist principles and building on past experiences.

Race/ethnicity is vitally important but not the sole locus of identity, experience or meaning

Race remains a vitally important part of contemporary life and politics, but it is neither separate from other factors (class, gender, sexuality, disability) nor is it always the most important (essential) characteristic in human experience and action. Race may be more or less important to the same person at different times and in different contexts. Racism must be constantly and rigorously investigated, not simply asserted or denied according to some favoured perspective.

There are no angels or devils — just humans:

It is vital to break with victim/criminal stereotypes of minority youth and reject angels/devils categories which:

(a) regard racism as a 'whites only' preserve; and
(b) require the maintenance of fictions about the essential 'goodness' of minority groups, as if they were not subject to the same depth and variation as other people. By engaging with the variability and complexity of social relations, antiracism can build genuine support and involvement across race and class barriers.

No general theory of antiracism is possible or appropriate:

There is no blueprint for successful anti-racism — no one 'correct' way. What succeeds at one time, or in one context, may not be appropriate at a later date or in another context. Racism changes; it works differently through different processes and changes with particular institutional contexts. Antiracism must recognise and adapt to this complexity.

The politics of anti-racist change:

Racism cannot simply be taught or 'reasoned' out of people or systems. Racism is shaped and reconstructed through so many diverse perspectives and agencies that it is ridiculous to imagine that people can simply identify it and leave it at the school gates, in the way they can shed their 'civilian' clothes for a more scholarly uniform. Racism is about power and about self/other definitions. Antiracism, therefore, is likely to challenge existing interests and it is probably naive to expect change via group discussion and self-analysis. In changing institutions like schools it may be necessary to mobilise a range of constituencies, including pupils, local communities and senior management.

These broad principles do not offer any comfortable or easy solutions, but they do suggest some of the ways which anti-racism may have to adopt in order to play its proper role in the future. Perhaps the most heartening finding to emerge from research in antiracist schools concerns the dedication and sensitivity of many pupils, of all ethnic backgrounds.

Teachers make mistakes — especially as they struggle to rework practices and assumptions which they may never have previously questioned. However, the pupils were not only supportive of antiracism, they played an active role in encouraging a more rigorous and workable approach. They seemed remarkably sensitive to the complexity of situations and were prepared to work with teachers — *if* they were convinced of their sincerity and willingness to apply anti-racism to dealings with colleagues and parents, as well as children.

Real Schools
Information about David Gillborn's book *Racism and Antiracism in Real Schools*, published by the Open University Press in February 1995, is available from the OU Press, 22 Ballmoor, Buckingham MK18 1XW.

The European context

The future of ethnicity in the European Community

Annette Bosscher, head of division in the European Commission's Directorate-General on Employment, Industrial Relations and Social Affairs, outlined the contents and concerns of a recent EC communication:

The European Commission's views on the issue of immigration were made public in February 1994 in a Communication addressed to the Council and the European Parliament. The Communication offers a framework for a long-term strategy on immigration and asylum which it believes can provide the basis for the comprehensive and active policies which the Union needs in these fields ... There are three separate but interrelated elements:

- taking action on migration pressure;
- controlling migration flows;
- strengthening integration policies for the benefit of legal immigrants.

As I said, these elements are interrelated. It has for example become clear that an indispensable condition for successful integration policies with respect to immigrants resident in the Union is control of migration flows.

Nearly all Community countries are now countries of immigration, even if some are unwilling to acknowledge the fact. Integration is therefore an issue for all member states. It means, for the Commission, offering migrants and their descendants the opportunity to live in the host country like the nationals of that country. That requires providing migrants with sufficient resources (such as knowledge of the language, housing, education, vocational training, etc) to enable them gradually to attain parity with the national population. From the immigrants themselves it requires the willingness to adapt to the lifestyle of the host society without losing their cultural identity, and acceptance of the fact that equality of rights entails equality of obligations.

Immigration to the Community has been a positive process, which has brought enormous economic and social benefits. The Communication takes as its starting point the view that integration policies must now be directed in a meaningful way towards improving the situation of immigrants legally resident within the Union. That requires taking steps towards strengthening their rights relative to those of citizens of the member states with a view to achieving parity of rights.

The proposals contained in the Communication therefore address actions intended to improve the legal situation of third country nationals; to create the right economic and socio-cultural environment for successful integration; to provide information and dialogue; and to combat the specific problems of racial discrimination and xenophobia.

Education matters

Fritz Wittek, an external expert to the European Commission on the education of ethnic minority children, outlined the key principles in a recent EC document:

The main purpose of this paper is to highlight a few key issues raised in a recent European Commission document entitled *Report on the education of migrants' children in the European Union*, and to put this in the wider context of European Union policy development in the education field. What is the Commission's analysis, and what opportunities are available to promote action to improve the education of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds?

Before addressing these two issues, it needs to be said, however, that the Commission's use of terminology ('migrants' children'), while clearly inadequate, reflects the wide range of situations which are to be found in the Union's member states. As is well known, there are few countries where immigrants and their families enjoy full citizenship status. In the face of overwhelming contradictory evidence, some member states continue officially to deny that they have become immigration countries, and this sometimes leads to the Commission opting for the use of terminology which is thought to help avoiding unnecessary 'debate about words' with governments. Policy development at Community level is of necessity incremental, slow and sometimes contradictory.

"... the history of Community policy in this area has been a complex and difficult one, fraught with legal complications and sometimes hindered by the political reluctance of (some) member states to address policy issues which are seen as politically sensitive ..."

This is even more important to understand as the education of pupils from immigrant and ethnic minority backgrounds has for a long time been at the intersection of two policy areas where there was no Community competence: education and immigration. What policies were developed were based on certain aspects of Community *social* law, another area where there was (and continues to be) considerable controversy as to whether this should be a suitable matter for policy development at Community level. All this has meant that the history of Community policy in this area has been a complex and difficult one, fraught with legal complications and sometimes hindered by the political reluctance of (some) member states to address policy issues which are seen as politically sensitive, and which are not exactly everybody's priorities either...

"... the need to locate all Community action in this field in the framework of the educational struggle against racism, xenophobia and anti-semitism. While this is not revolutionary, it is solid stuff ..."

Three main themes run through the Commission's report. First, there is the school population's growing cultural and diversity. "The percentage of children whose everyday experience inside and outside schools is affected by contact with speakers of languages other than their own must now be estimated to represent around 50 per cent of school children in member states. All the signs are that this trend will continue." Second, there is the need to promote equality of opportunity and academic achievement. "Education systems and schools are confronted with the challenge of integrating all pupils into a unified educational framework able to ensure equality of opportunity and optimum success for all pupils while at the same time respecting their specific cultural identities."

Third, "the Commission is convinced of the need to locate all Community action in this field in the framework of the educational struggle against racism, xenophobia and anti-semitism." While this is not revolutionary, it is solid stuff, extending way beyond the limits of the assimilationist or segregationist thinking that the use of the term 'migrants' children' might suggest to a sceptical reader...

The far right: France and Britain compared

Dr Andrée Shepherd, based at the Université Lumière in Lyon, France, compared and contrasted far right political parties in Britain and France:

The French and British parties of the far right all speak the same language, based on xenophobia, antisemitism and populist nationalism. But there are blatant differences as regards their electoral impact. In Britain, as is well known, they have negligible national impact. Their presence on the ground is thin and scattered, and they are considered by the majority of the population to be undesirable. The strident intolerance and provocative statements of their spokesmen are openly racist ... The election strategy of the BNP, as expressed by John Tyndall before the 1992 general election, was to select "key areas" and capture "the racist Tory vote", to use the election campaign to "enable the local party organisation to grow in maturity and experience, and to become known locally through the party's leaflets and the publicity generated. Tyndall described a two or three per cent share of the vote as "enough", a four or five per cent share as "political dynamite", and a share above five per cent as having "enormous" political consequences ...

In France, however, the *Front National* achieved a breakthrough in the 1980s, after a slow start. It was created in 1972 by Jean-Marie Le Pen as a "unitary federation" by "an ill-assorted band of men embittered by the loss of colonial Algeria and still nostalgic for the stunted spirit of Vichy France" (*Le Monde*, 4 February 1992) and it leaders were described as "paper tigers". In the 1970s, it was dismissed as a "flash" phenomenon and remained divided. At the 1974 presidential election, Jean-Marie Le Pen polled only 0.7 per cent of the vote in the first ballot. Twenty years later, after the 1992 elections, *L'Express* wrote: "The novelty of the moment is that the *Front National* is proving no flash in a pan but making itself at home; it is not simply growing, but firmly taking root and extending its networks and influence nationwide." In these elections, the FN vote represented 3,400,000 voters and 239 seats (a gain of 104 seats by comparison with the 1986 regional elections). The FN strongholds are in the South East and the Paris area (over 20 per cent of the vote). Analysing the results of an opinion poll, Le Monde claimed (25 October 1991) that "one French person in three shares Le Pen's ideas".

The FN has imposed what can be described as "the politics of respectable racism". Until 1993 it was calling the tune on tough immigration policy — this task being now assumed by Charles Pasqua, the Home Secretary in a mainstream right wing government ...

You may well say: "But this is France." Yes. But one must beware of too smug an attitude — remember that 20 years ago Le Pen only scored 0.7 per cent in the presidential election. The British far right remains marginalised, but some of its ideas, notably on immigration, have pervaded mainstream politics. The conservative party has so far managed to steer a safe course with its tough language on immigration and early reform of the nationality laws, and includes in its ideology the defence of patriotic values and the preservation of the national heritage and institutions.

"... The British far right remains marginalised, but some of its ideas, notably on immigration, have pervaded mainstream politics."

Or you'll say: "Most European parties of the far right do not score well in elections." Well? But 1994 saw the spectacular rise of Belusconi's populist party — to some an ominous sign. And the resurgence of extreme right nationalism everywhere in Europe is accompanied by attempts at coordination of sister groups and building international contacts.

Who can swear that the extreme right will remain marginal? With the opening of frontiers and the increased pressure of the "refugee problem" on European countries with low birth rates, there is a potential danger — the Front National clearly identified this as a golden opportunity to extend its influence in France. The best way to guard against the danger of an extension of covert and overt racism may well be at European level — to influence and support the antiracist agenda of the European Parliament and the European Commission, so as to build a tolerant, multi-cultural, multi-ethnic Europe.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The power of TV imagery

Meera Syal

Meera Syal is an actress and writer. She has appeared at the National Theatre, the Royal Court and on Broadway, and has written and performed in BBC2's comedy programme The Real McCoy *since its inception.*

Ladies and gentlemen, brothers and sisters, fellow optimists, because essentially that's why we're all here, first of all I'd like to thank you for inviting me here tonight. And I suppose the fact I am here as an after-dinner speaker is a real sign of how times are changing, because a few years ago the entertainment would have been a fat white guy in a bri-nylon suit and glittery waistcoat telling jokes about in-laws and Pakistanis. But luckily Michael Howard had another engagement tonight. Sorry Michael, just a little joke in exchange for years of colonial oppression. Quite a bargain, if you ask me.

But it is true nevertheless that you can tell the state of a nation's health by its sense of humour, and I hope Mr Howard is well enough to take what I just threw at him. Because it was not too long ago that we were the butts of everyone's jokes rather than the joke-tellers. For example, when I was growing up I was subjected to programmes like *Love Thy Neighbour, Mind Your Language, It Ain't Half Hot, Mum* and the *Black and White Minstrel Show*, all of which I know the TV executives would like to forget, but they are for ever burned in my memory, mainly because they did feature the very few black and Asian people that I ever got to see on television.

Just to remind those of you who missed these comic gems, or those of you who had the sense to boycott them. *Love Thy Neighbour* was the predictable scenario of a smart black couple living next to a racist white guy and his well-meaning, long-suffering wife. Of course, you knew what was going to happen: the white guy would call the black guy names, the black guy would act in a noble and restrained manner and eventually get the better of him, and each episode would end with the two wives laughing about how silly their racist husbands were. But I didn't laugh, there were too many things I found very confusing. For example, why did the white guy have all the funniest lines when he was meant to be the villain? This was later to be identified as the Alf Garnett syndrome where you take a racist, let him spout what he likes to get a cheap laugh, and then claim you were not glorifying these people, you were trying to show how silly they are. Yep, about as convincing as Fergie doing charity work.

To fight back

The worst consequence of these programmes was always in the playground the next day, where I would get called every insult the white neighbour had made so funny the night before. And what could I say back to this? Get lost you Honky. I mean, what kind of an insult is Honky? It's certainly not on a par with nigger or paki, it has no history or weight behind it. And I think that just showed how much we were the victims of this kind of humour, that we hadn't even

found the vocabulary to fight back. Now of course you just call someone a Bernard Manning fan or a Tory and have done with it. Sorry, Michael. That's a favourite insult of one of my cousins, by the way. He's in Harmondsworth detention centre, he's got some really good jokes. I suppose you've got to have a sense of humour if you've got an Indian passport nowadays.

Now It Ain't Half Hot Mum was actually set in India, following the fortunes of a troop of British entertainers posted to the jungle. I love that word, jungle, it's so seventies isn't it? I can't be too pious about this one, because my mum and dad never missed it. I'm not sure they found it funny, but they had a great deal of sympathy for the three Indian servants in the show, the Chaiwallah, the Punkawallah, and the Sikh fixer called Ranjit, which was of course abbreviated to Randy because it's hard enough running an empire without having to learn new words as well.

The best lines

Of course, this was TV's version of the British occupation — decent civilised Englishmen and disorganised lazy natives, who are obviously benefiting no end from being colonised, and learning important stuff like how to sip tea without slurping. But it was worth watching, just for Ranjit's character. Ranjit had all the best lines. He was cheeky and funny and, yes, he was played by a white actor wearing half a can of shoe polish on his face. Strangely enough, he was called Michael too.

You can imagine my shock at discovering this, the best part going on telly for an Asian actor and it was played by someone from Surbiton. Now this tradition of blacking up is not new. We've had generations of actors doing just that to play Othello, we have had Alec Guiness doing it as recently as four years ago when he played Professor Godbole in *Passage to India*. Now in principle I am not against an actor playing any part he or she feels connected with. After all, that is supposed to be our skill, reflecting a whole range of human experience.

But if the devil always has the best lines, where did that leave the black actor in all this? Yep, he played the straight man, much like Tonto to the Lone Ranger. Always there, always decent, and boring as hell. Of course, this is usually the problem when nervous liberal white writers try to write for black actors. They're so anxious to show how nice they think we are that they don't write good rounded parts, they write social mouthpieces, and the poor actor looks like he's on hire for the day from the Forestry Commission. This is particularly noticeable in many American films and TV programmes where a minority actor is used as a conscience salve.

A real piece of the action

On the surface American drama does undoubtedly make efforts to reflect its vast multi-racial community. This should be expected. The black community there is much larger and longer established than we are here and they have had to fight the legacy of slavery. But still, after all those struggles, how many black actors actually carry a film? Maybe a handful are considered bankable. The rest of them are the fillers, still playing Tonto roles — the sober religious judge, the sidekick who you know is going to get killed off so that the white hero can get to avenge his death and get to do all the exciting car chases and shoot outs. And there was that poor guy who pushed Ironside around in his wheelchair for several series, what a thankless job that was. There must have been times when he felt like leaving the handbrake off on a steep hill just so he could get a real piece of the action.

This is lip service representation — give them enough exposure to feel grateful but none of the power to actually change the way they are seen. This will only change truly when we have more black writers, producers, directors, the money people. He or she who holds the purse strings rules the world.

Real people have faults

The other thing which puzzled me about *Love Thy Neighbour* was why, when the white man was so racist, did he fancy the pants off his black neighbour's wife? Now years later of course, I've read Angela Davies who says that the ultimate act of emasculation is to possess and degrade the women of your enemies. So now I know. But it still wasn't funny because these people were not real to me at all. Real people have faults, are confused, make mistakes, especially in comedy where laughter is so tied in with vulnerability. When I watched all these comedy programmes, I did not see anyone I recognised as real. I saw versions of how the host community saw us.

Unfortunately, the tradition of blacking up has only ever been one-way traffic. How many black actors do you see in restoration drama, a Dickens adaptation, an Agatha Christie? The excuse used would be of course, oh that's not realistic, but whose version of reality? There has been a black population in England since the sixteen hundreds. Having a black Victorian is a damn sight more realistic than having Alec Guiness in a dhoti and a rather bad welsh accent.

This was also of course the whole premise of the *Black and White Minstrel Show*, which eventually just got too ridiculous when they finally did employ some black singers in the seventies and asked them to put make-up on so they would look the same as everyone else. Maybe they knew if they put a real person next to their licorice allsorts men, the audience would suddenly cotton on that they had been duping them all these years. Maybe a lot of the audience thought this is what black people actually looked like, who knows, things move slowly in places like Penge. But both these examples uncover something very interesting; fear. Fear is what propels all prejudice, it was fear that prevented those in power putting a real Asian actor in that part, putting real black people on stage singing, because they knew that those that entertain have great power.

Role models

This is why role models are so important. And I know it has become one of those trite terms that trip off the tongue at conferences such as this, but you cannot underestimate the effect on young minds that a visible and successful black person has. When I was growing up, there were only two Asian women on television. One was the TV comedy, *Mind Your Language*, set in an English language class at a college. My heroine was a barely literate woman in a lurid sari which looked like the scene of a traffic accident who spent most of her time knitting and saying 'goodness gracious me'. I then looked at my mother who was round about the same age, a former university lecturer turned teacher who dressed in French silks and could quote Keats and Shelley, and occasionally said 'bugger' when she was annoyed, and wondered where the programme makers had done their research. The other Asian role model was a young glamorous woman in children's TV called Ayshe Benton who co-presented a show with a hand puppet called Fred the Dog, who inevitably got all the best lines. That to me was the height of fame, that represented what I could aspire to if I worked hard. Twenty minutes of air time with your hand up a dog's bum.

If you do not see yourself reflected in the mass media, or reflected solely in a negative or minimal way, you begin to think you are at best unworthy and, finally, invisible. It still amazes me how little Asian people are reflected in advertising, as if we never buy toothpaste, take out mortgages, or wash our clothes in the whitest of white soap powders. If a Martian was to land tomorrow, he'd assume we spent all our time picking tea, never drinking it, and bringing curry powder home by elephant rather than car.

Dodging bullets

The ability to make people laugh is a lethal weapon, and for me an Indian growing up in Britain in the sixties and seventies, jokes were about dodging bullets. Humour involving any kind of minority was cruel, preyed on people's stereotypes, it did not enlighten, it only reinforced prejudice. It continually pointed to the fact that we were different, outsiders, and therefore did not belong. Comedy did not involve how I saw the world, what I found funny. Comedy, in short, belonged to men like Bernard Manning.

But then something happened called alternative comedy. Now I know this conjures up images of loud men with false working class accents and bad knitwear who begin their routines with "I hate that Maggie Thatcher, miners are great aren't they, I know about Asians cos I've eaten a lot of curry." But believe me, this was in comedy terms a revolution. For the first time, it became unacceptable to use race to get a cheap laugh. Mocking someone simply because they are different from you was now too easy, and too dangerous, because of people growing up like me, a whole new generation born and brought up in Britain who were not willing to accept the insults our parents regarded as part and parcel of being black in Britain. Comedy had to develop an imagination, compassion, it had to look for the common areas, what pulled us together rather than what separated us as people. Most of all, it had to look for new voices, new energy. This is where '*The Real McCoy*' came in.

Power of the punchline

Now I should stress this is not a plug, but if you haven't seen or heard of '*The Real McCoy*', you are seriously square and un-street-credible. '*The Real McCoy*' is the first and at the moment only black and Asian comedy sketch show on TV. I have been a writer and performer for all four series. It has been in TV terms a surprise hit — a surprise to some crusty TV executives, perhaps, but not to any of us involved with it, nor to the loyal black and Asian audience that has stayed with us since we started. Our material ranges from recognisable characters rooted firmly in our respective communities to musical skits, slapstick, political satire and, yes, some sketches which finally turn the tables and examine how we see the white community. But most importantly, it lets us speak from our own experiences, in our own voices. We finally have the power of the punchline and let me tell you, it feels sweet.

And this is the most positive sign that things are changing, we have done our maths and concluded that if we are getting figures of three million plus there must be a lot of white people out there watching us. Of course, some of them might have read Real McCoy in the paper and switched on hoping to see a Scottish soap opera, but they obviously liked what they saw. Good comedy is in the end universal and laughter binds people together, doing more for race relations than a million political speeches. And besides, I get paid for it too.

So from *Love Thy Neighbour* to *The Real McCoy* in twenty years, that must point to some kind of progress. But it will be interesting to see what happens next. In another twenty years, will there be a hundred Real McCoys on TV, or shall we still be known as the black comedy show, the token that exists to prevent any further, more radical change? Will all of the cast members be playing comedy roles in other white mainstream shows, rounded real characters where acting ability is more important than the colour of their skin? I have to say, that on the strength of some of the acting roles I have been offered recently, we still have a long way to go. Let me see, over the last year I've been offered six worthy asexual doctors, four exotic babes running away from marriage, three bewildered, barely literate housewives, two newsagents who get to say that's forty pence for your newspaper please, and well I wish I had been offered a partridge in a pear tree because that at least would have been an acting challenge.

You see, like many of you out there, I am lucky enough to have two cultures at my disposal. And sometimes, I want to explore and celebrate my differences, and other times, explore what makes me the same as anybody else. I am waiting for the time when I can move effortlessly from playing a garrulous Indian auntie in *The Real McCoy* to a glamorous business woman in *Cracker* to a down and out in *Eastenders*, without having to justify my brown face with a speech about arranged marriages. I will not be seen as representative because, hopefully, there will be thousands like me in every programme, reflecting the society we live in. And this will only happen when we are in the positions of power where such decisions are made. That is the time when we'll know we have cracked it. It's called having your cake and eating it. But I think we've earned it, don't you?

Agenda for Action

PRINCIPLES

1 Public philosophy

There is a need for a new public philosophy and new national consensus about the nature of Britain as a multi-ethnic society.

Such a philosophy and consensus will celebrate diversity, but also will clarify the balance between diversity of ethnicity, culture and religion and the need for cohesion and shared values.

It will involve critical examination of key terms such as "race", "race relations", "ethnicity" and "identity".

2 Legislation

Such a philosophy needs to be underpinned by, and expressed through, new legislation. This will take into account processes of exclusion and discrimination based on culture and religion as well as on ethnicity and race, and, ideally, will be part of a coherent constitutional framework of citizens' rights and obligations.

3 Accountability

The philosophy will also require new forms of governance and accountability, and therefore new relationships and partnerships between:

- national, local and regional government
- the state and the market
- public bodies, including quangos, and the private and voluntary sectors.

4 Central Government

Central Government has important roles to play through:

- developing and enforcing legislation
- the provision of resources
- as a purchaser
- as an employer
- shaping and leading public opinion, through both actions and words.

5 Responsibilities of all

At the same time it is essential to emphasise that bottom-upwards approaches to change are important as well as top-down, and that initiatives need to be encouraged and taken not only at Government level but at many other levels also.

In the light of these general principles, the following specific action points are proposed. In relation to most of them, the Government has a clear responsibility to take the initiative. However, most of the points have direct implications for the work and activities of many other bodies, institutions and agencies also.

ACTION POINTS

National commission

1 A national commission on multi-ethnic Britain should be set up, to develop further the proposals listed in this report. The commission should consult with all interested parties, and should aim to disseminate its findings as widely as possible.

Monitoring and review

2 A common terminology for ethnic monitoring needs to be established, and a clear authoritative statement needs to be issued about (a) the range of purposes of such monitoring and (b) practical procedures to adopt and pitfalls to avoid.

3 Research should be conducted and published on the effects of recent legislative changes, with specific reference to impacts on black and ethnic minority communities: in particular the effects of the Education Reform Act 1988, and subsequent legislation in education; the restructuring of the health service; the erosion of Section 11 funding; and the introduction of internal markets in many spheres of local government.

4 Urban regeneration programmes must be monitored with regard to the benefits which they bring to black and ethnic minority communities. The results of such monitoring should be shared with the communities themselves, and must be seen to have a beneficial impact on subsequent policy and practice.

5 Changes and developments in the economy and therefore in job opportunities should be monitored and predicted with regard to their impact on black and ethnic minority communities.

6 A body should be established in the UK, along the lines of the Bureau of Immigration and Population Research in Australia, to conduct research on the economic and social impact of immigration. This would be independent of, but funded by, Government. One of its first tasks should be to organise a public consultation exercise about the principles and content of immigration and asylum policy. This would involve all interested parties — including employers, unions, ethnic minority communities, and public bodies and institutions.

7 There needs to be a review of ways in which immigration and asylum controls may fall below international human rights standards, and of the Government's decision to derogate from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the UN Convention on Civil and Political Rights because of immigration law.

8 An official body — an "Immigration Watchdog" (or section of a new Human Rights Commission) — should be set up to monitor policy and practice on immigration, nationality and asylum, and to advise Government on any measures needed to ensure that UK policy and practice are in line with international human rights standards.

Race relations legislation

9 The scope of the Race Relations Act should be extended so as to reverse the effect of the majority decision of the House of Lords in Re Amin (1983) 2 AC 818 and to include the provision of all public services, including the functions of the police, prison and immigration services.

10 The Commission for Racial Equality should have monitoring powers equivalent to those of the Fair Employment Commission set up under the Fair Employment (Northern Ireland) Acts of 1976 and 1989.

11 The requirements of the Race Relations Act should be applied in Northern Ireland.

12 Provisions in the Race Relations Act should apply to all contractors who bid for public service contracts.

13 Legislation against religious discrimination should be introduced in Great Britain, similar to that which already exists in Northern Ireland.

14 The Commission for Racial Equality, or another similar organisation, should have responsibility for coordinating practical and standardised procedures for ethnically based monitoring.

15 To supplement the strengthening of the legislative base there should be a system of mediation and arbitration in the community, so that individuals do not always have to have recourse to the criminal justice system.

Public services and local government

16 Mechanisms need to be established to ensure proper responsibility and accountability in public services, for example by having greater transparency in the ways quangos are set up and managed and how members are appointed.

17 Urban regeneration projects must be based on long-term strategies and rigorous analysis of needs; be people-driven and people-friendly; be democratically accountable; and be adequately resourced. Further, they must be "capacity-building", giving individuals and voluntary organisations the managerial, financial and communication skills which they need to be successful.

18 There is an urgent need for the black and ethnic minority voluntary sector to be adequately resourced. This has implications for central and local government, for charities and trusts, and for the private sector.

19 All political parties, at both national and local levels, should take steps to involve more black and ethnic minority people in their affairs, as party workers, campaigners and candidates.

20 Non-elected bodies such as quangos should appoint more black and ethnic minority members.
See also action point 42:
There needs to be an all-party national association or forum for black and ethnic minority councillors in local government.

Education, youth and training

21 There needs to be a national youth policy, supervised perhaps by a minister with designated responsibility. Its concerns should include the involvement of young people in democratic processes, including registration to vote; disaffection and deviance, and truancy and exclusions from schools; and youth training and community involvement.

22 The national curriculum should include more teaching about Britain as a multi-ethnic society, and about the roles, rights and responsibilities of citizens in such a society.

23 It is imperative in this regard that teacher training, both initial and inservice, should equip teachers to teach about multi-ethnic Britain.

24 The framework for school inspections should be developed to take fuller account of preparing children and young people to be active citizens of a multi-ethnic society.

25 There needs to be separate and specific financial support for the raising of academic achievement in multi-ethnic schools, and in this context for the teaching of English to bilingual pupils. Such funding must be available for inservice training of teachers as well as direct teaching of pupils, and should take account of the results of international research into the features of effective schools.

26 All Training and Enterprise Councils should be required to build equality issues into their strategic plans to ensure fair distribution of resources.

Employment and management

27 Initiatives should be taken to encourage black and ethnic minority businesses, and to enable them to become substantial employers in their own right.

28 It is important that the business case for race and gender equality should be made and argued more clearly, both in the private and public sectors.

29 In both the private and public sectors there is a need for small-scale projects which involve examining very closely the criteria and procedures used in the recruitment of staff to programmes and schemes of management training and development, to ensure that they are scrupulously fair.

30 More use of the Investors in People scheme should be made as a context for systematically reviewing the career development needs of black and ethnic minority staff.

31 There need to be nationally agreed standards about what it means to be an "equal opportunities employer".

32 Progress in the implementation of equal opportunities policies and practices should be built into appraisal schemes for senior managers.

33 Organisations and institutions should make more use of consultants and "critical friends" from outside.

34 All firms bidding for contracts from public bodies should be required to demonstrate that they have fair employment practices.

See also action point 43:

It would be valuable if there were more opportunities for black and ethnic minority managers, in both the private and public sectors, to meet on matters of common concern. These include the nature of glass ceilings; the expectations and pressures on people who are seen as role models and representatives, and their consequent tasks and responsibilities; and dealing with racism of various kinds in organisational cultures.

Immigration policy

35 A rational and informed immigration policy should be developed which will:

- respect international human rights standards
- reflect the real economic needs of the UK
- recognise the economic and cultural contributions to mainstream society which immigrants and refugees make.

36 Organisations should constantly draw attention to the ways in which immigration and asylum practice fall below international standards — as a powerful way of highlighting the fact that government treats immigrants and refugees in ways which are inconceivable for any other group in the UK, for example detention without trial.

37 Political leaders at national and local level should exercise public leadership to change the terms of the debate on immigrants and refugees (as on ethnic minorities). They should:

- celebrate their positive contribution to society;
- avoid derogatory language;
- recognise the value of symbolic gestures, eg. visiting victims of racist attacks;
- explain rationale of immigration policy to the public.

European contexts and dimensions

38 A working group should be established to study ways in which the interests of minorities can be protected within the European Union.

39 There needs to be a non-racist concept of European citizenship. The Treaty of European Union should be amended so as to forbid racial as well as nationality and gender discrimination, securing equal rights for all European citizens, irrespective of their colour, race, nationality or ethnic origins.

40 All organisations and individuals concerned with aspects of multi-ethnic Britain should involve themselves in the inter-governmental conference process for 1996.

Networks and contacts

41 Race relations and race equality trainers need to meet together to share and reflect on experience in the public and private sectors, and to establish their own training needs and performance standards.

42 There needs to be an all-party national association or forum for black and ethnic minority councillors in local government.

43 It would be valuable if there were more opportunities for black and ethnic minority managers, in both the private and public sectors, to meet on matters of common concern. These include the nature of glass ceilings; the expectations and pressures on people who are seen as role models and representatives, and their consequent tasks and responsibilities; and dealing with racism of various kinds in organisational cultures.

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* Please note: acronyms and abbreviations are explained on page 49.

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Abbreviations

*AID: Advice Information Development
*BFSS: British and Foreign Schools Society
*CAB: Citizens Advice Bureau
*CC: County Council
*CCETSW: Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work
*CHE: College of Higher Education
*GLHA: Greater London Housing Association
*MAST: Management and Skills Training
*MBC: Metropolitan Borough Council
*NUT: National Union of Teachers
*QED: Quest for Education and Development
*SCIP: Schools Curriculum Industry Partnership
*TEC: Training and Enterprise Council
*TVEI: Technical and Vocational Education Initiative

Multi-Ethnic Britain — Facts and Trends

The conference resource book was based mainly on data in the 1991 Census but drew also from a range of other official sources. Nearly all of its statistical tables, charts and figures were specially created.

The book begins with basic facts and figures about the black and ethnic minority population. One of the tabulations, for example, lists the local authorities where black and ethnic minority people mainly live, and shows the absolute and relative sizes of the largest communities.

The rest of the book is structured according to the notion of "the multi-ethnic good society". Such a society, it is suggested, has five main measurable features, to do respectively with politics and government; management and employment; crime, law and justice; material conditions of life; and culture, education and recreation. Statistical tables show the progress which Britain has so far made (and, alas, not made) in the first four of these five areas. The book will be an invaluable baseline for measuring and recording further progress in the years ahead.

1994, reprinted with revisions 1995.
A4, 36 pages, many tables and illustrations. £5.00, post free.

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